BLACK WIDOW BITES P. 86▶

HAVE A "TERROR-IFIC" TIME this Halloween and throughout the fall with these frightful yet delightful recipes, crafts and ideas. Get in the spirit of the season with 65 monster-approved main dishes, snacks and treats, including party-perfect stew and chili recipes on pull-out cards.

▲SPIDERWEB PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE P. 80

TRULY TEXAN CHILI P. 47▼

Taste of Home

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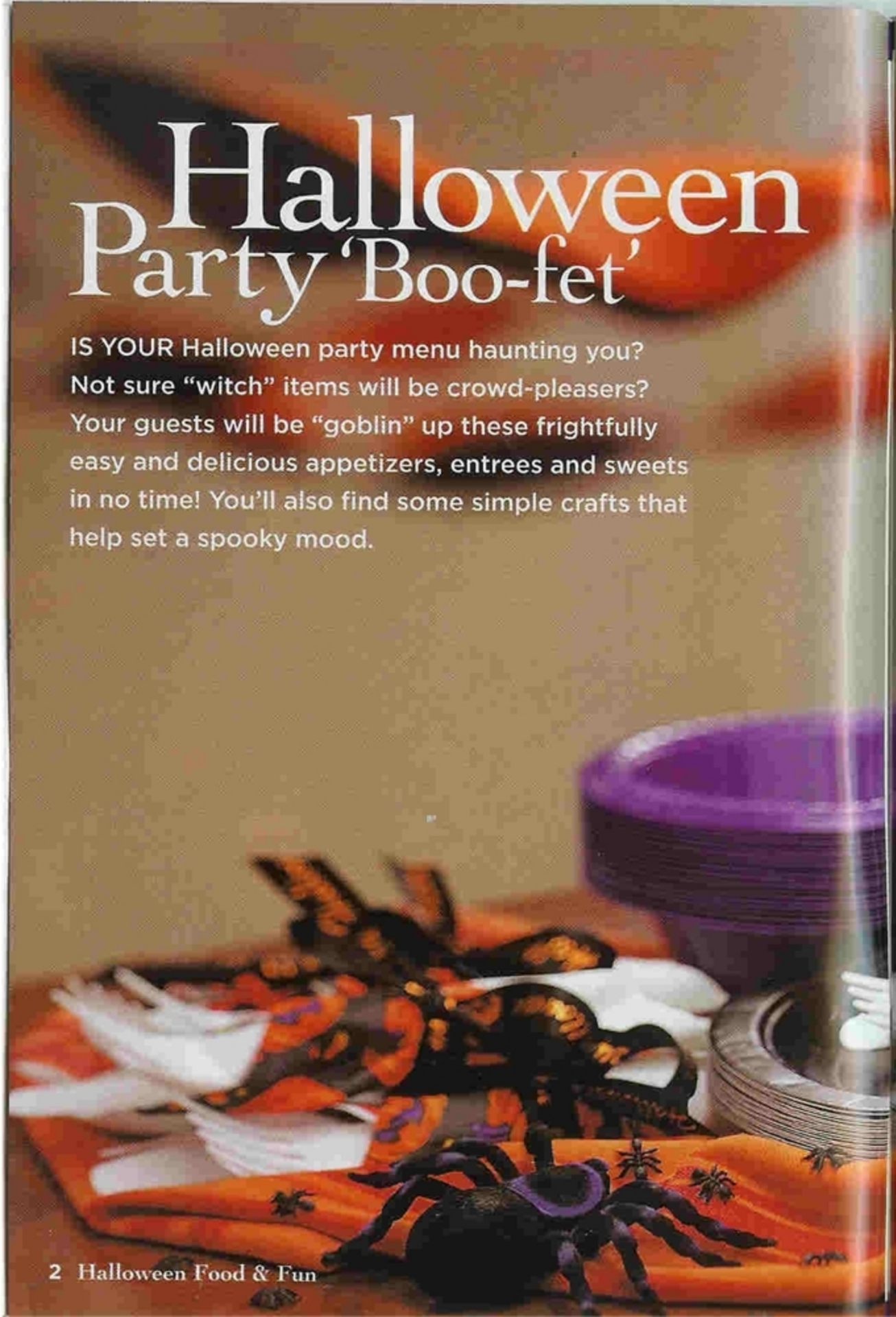
Halloween Party 'Boo-fet'

IS YOUR Halloween party menu haunting you? Not sure "witch" items will be crowd-pleasers? Your guests will be "goblin" up these frightfully easy and delicious appetizers, entrees and sweets in no time! You'll also find some simple crafts that help set a spooky mood.



Spooky Citrus Punch (PICTURED ABOVE)

There's no doubt this refreshing beverage will quench your thirst!

IRENE KUSLER, EUREKA, SOUTH DAKOTA

- 1 can (12 ounces) frozen limeade concentrate, thawed
- ¾ cup lemonade concentrate
- 2 cups water
- ¼ cup sugar, optional
- 4 drops green food coloring
- 29 drops yellow food coloring
- 2 liters ginger ale, chilled
- Ice cubes

In a large punch bowl, combine the limeade and lemonade concentrates. Stir in water, sugar if desired and food coloring. Stir in the ginger ale. Serve immediately over ice. **Yield:** about 3 quarts.

Cauldron Dip (PICTURED BELOW)

This witch's cauldron doesn't hold a spooky brew—just a Halloween snack that's frightfully fun! Our Test Kitchen formed a pot by toasting a slice of rye bread, then filled it with a creamy dip that's perfect with the pretzel "logs" and sweet pepper "flames" that are placed underneath.

- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon garlic salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 slice soft dark rye bread
- 1 *each* medium sweet red, yellow and orange pepper, julienned
- 10 pretzel rods, broken in half

In a small bowl, combine sour cream, parsley, sugar, onion powder, garlic salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate.

Flatten bread with a rolling pin. Press over an inverted greased 10-oz. custard cup. Top with another 10-oz. custard cup. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 7 minutes. Carefully remove top dish. Bake 3-5 minutes longer or until bread is lightly toasted. Immediately remove the bread from the dish. Cool.

Fill bread bowl with dip. Arrange peppers and pretzels under and around bowl. **Yield:** 1 cup.

Slow Cooker Cheese Dip (PICTURED AT RIGHT)

I brought this slightly spicy cheese dip to a gathering with friends, where it was a huge hit.

MARION BARTONE, CONNEAUT, OHIO

- 1 pound ground beef
- ½ pound bulk hot pork sausage
- 2 pounds process cheese (Velveeta), cubed
- 2 cans (10 ounces *each*) diced tomatoes and green chilies, undrained
- Tortilla chips

In a large skillet, cook beef and sausage over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. Transfer to a 5-qt. slow cooker. Add cheese and tomatoes; mix well. Cover and cook on low for 4 hours or until the cheese is melted, stirring occasionally. Serve with tortilla chips. **Yield:** 3 quarts.

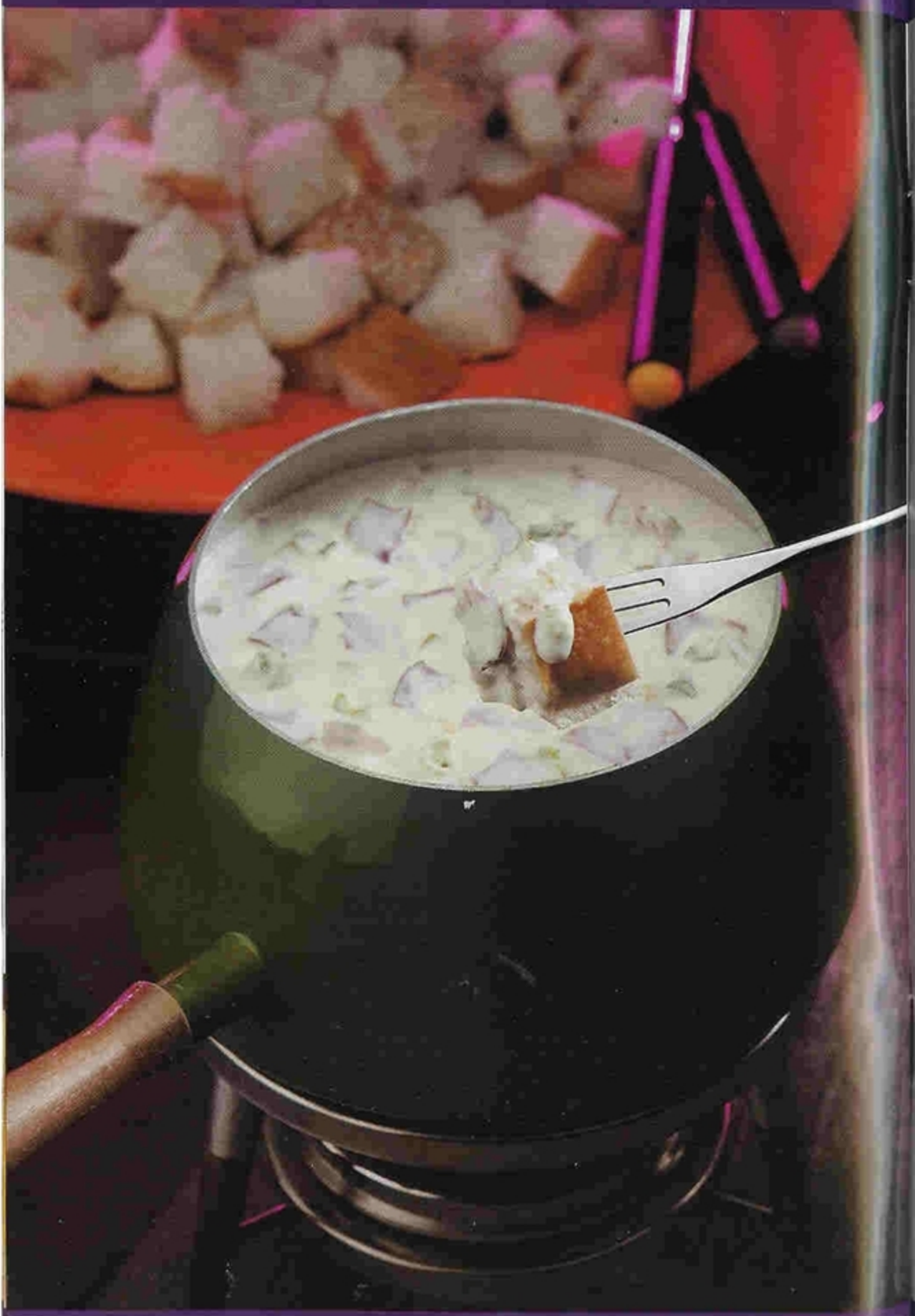
Jack-o'-Lantern Sandwiches (PICTURED BELOW LEFT)

Be prepared for happy faces when you make these eye-catching jack-o'-lanterns from *Taste of Home's* Test Kitchen. These sandwiches are loaded with flavorful fillings, then easily formed into fun pumpkin shapes using cookie cutters.

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons Italian salad dressing mix
- 16 slices whole wheat *or* white bread
- 8 slices process American cheese
- 1 pound shaved deli chicken *or* turkey
- 8 lettuce leaves

In a bowl, combine the mayonnaise and salad dressing mix; spread on each slice of bread. Top half of the slices with cheese, chicken and lettuce. Top with remaining bread.

Cut the sandwiches with a 4-in. pumpkin-shaped cutter. Remove top slice; cut out eyes and nose with a small triangle cutter. Use cutout pieces for the mouth. **Yield:** 8 sandwiches.



Creamy Chipped Beef Fondue (PICTURED AT LEFT)

My mother often served fondue at parties and I've since followed in that tradition. It's nice to offer a hearty appetizer that requires very little work.

BETH FOX, LAWRENCE, KANSAS

- 1-⅓ to 1-½ cups milk
- 2 packages (8 ounces *each*) cream cheese, cubed
- 1 package (2-½ ounces) thinly sliced dried beef, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped green onions
- 2 teaspoons ground mustard
- 1 loaf (1 pound) French bread, cubed

In a saucepan, heat milk and cream cheese over medium heat; stir until smooth. Stir in beef, onions and mustard; heat through. Transfer to a fondue pot or slow cooker; keep warm. Serve with bread cubes. **Yield:** about 4 cups.

Barbecued Pork Sandwiches (PICTURED BELOW)

I found this recipe in one of my great-aunt's cookbooks. The original recipe called for beef, but I used leftover pork roast I had on hand. My family and friends love these tangy sandwiches.

MELISSA NORRIS, CHURUBUSCO, INDIANA

- ¼ cup sugar
- 4 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1-½ teaspoons dried minced onion
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1-½ cups ketchup
- ¾ cup water
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- ¼ cup butter, cubed
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon prepared mustard
- 3 cups sliced cooked pork (about 1-½ pounds)
- 8 sandwich buns, split

In a large saucepan, combine the first 12 ingredients; stir until blended. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Add pork; heat through. Serve on buns. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Candy Corn Snack Mix (PICTURED AT RIGHT)

It's no trick—this Halloween party treat requires only three ingredients and 5 minutes to prepare. I simply mix together candy corn, M&M's and peanuts. Then I watch it all disappear!

DENISE NEAL, YORBA LINDA, CALIFORNIA

- 1 cup candy corn
- 1 cup milk chocolate M&M's
- 1 cup salted peanuts

In a serving bowl, combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** 3 cups.

Apple Dip with Crisps (PICTURED AT RIGHT)

My sister created this recipe for a family celebration, but it's great anytime. With the tempting taste of a home-baked pie, this finger food pairs warm spiced apples with cute cutout shapes from a prepared crust.

JONI KARCHER, GENEVA, NEBRASKA

Pastry for double-crust pie (9 inches)
- 2 tablespoons plus 3/4 cup sugar, *divided*
- 1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, *divided*
- 6 medium tart apples, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup cold water

For crisps, on a lightly floured surface, roll pastry to 1/8-in. thickness. Combine 2 tablespoons sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon; sprinkle over pastry. Cut with floured 2-1/2-in. Halloween-shaped cookie cutters. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 425° for 4-6 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, saute apples and remaining sugar and cinnamon in butter until apples are tender. Combine flour and cold water until smooth; stir into skillet. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Spoon into a serving dish. Serve warm with crisps. **Yield:** 3 cups dip and 2-3 dozen crisps.

Black Votive Cauldron

THESE "TERROR-IFIC" candle holders are sure to shed just the right spooky light on your Halloween party snack table!

Directions:

1. Paint a jelly jar black.
2. Spray a clear votive holder with crystal spray or sponge paint with white paint.
3. Place a small amount of polyester fiberfill inside black jar and stretch it out to cover outside of jar as shown.
4. Place votive holder in opening of jar.
5. Add plastic spiders where desired.

Set a Spooktacular Halloween Table

PLANNING A HALLOWEEN GATHERING? These ghostly ideas sent by two of our readers will add to the festive spirit.

"To create a spooky atmosphere and set the mood for a Halloween party, I transformed my table into a ghost (below)," writes Nella Parker from Hersey, Michigan. Here's how:

Place a pumpkin in the middle of the table and spread a white sheet evenly over pumpkin and tabletop. Using white string, gather the fabric at the base of the pumpkin to resemble the head of a ghost.

To make the face, cut out eyes and mouth from black felt and glue them on. If you wish, cut out felt bats, spiders, etc. to scatter on the table.

BOO-tiful Favor

Thanks to Georgia Wolff of Wharton, Texas, local hospital patients had something to smile about on Oct. 31.

"As a member of the hospital auxiliary, I made ghosts for tray favors (left)," Georgia says. "My ghosts were 6 inches tall, but you could make them any size you'd like."

She cut two ghost shapes from heavy construction paper, put a little polyfill stuffing between them and hot-glued the edges together. Georgia glued on tiny pom-poms for eyes and used a fine-tip black pen to draw on a mouth and stitch lines all around the edge of the figure.

"I bent the arms forward slightly so a string of pumpkins (stickers glued to heavyweight crochet thread) could hang from them freely," notes Georgia.

Finally, she glued the ghost to a base (a 3-inch circle of poster board) and added a construction paper cat, a black garland and a Halloween greeting.

Marble/Spiderweb Pumpkin

FOR A DELIGHTFULLY DIFFERENT way to carve a pumpkin, try this special method, which uses clear glass marbles to create a decorative web.

Directions:

1. Cut an opening in the bottom of a pumpkin and remove the seeds.
2. Draw a spiderweb and spider on a piece of tracing paper.
3. Hold the pattern on the pumpkin with a couple of push pins. Use another push pin to pierce the pattern and transfer the design onto the pumpkin. Gently carve away the outside of the pumpkin following the pin holes to create the solid lines. Use a small drill to drill holes where desired. Insert clear marbles into the drilled holes. Carve away the shell of the pumpkin to create the spider's body and press marbles into the carved-out area.

4. Place a string of white mini lights in the bottom of the pumpkin.
5. Add leaves around the bottom of the pumpkin.

ONCE UPON A VINE. "Seven-month-old Paige wonders, 'How long did Cinderella wait until that pumpkin turned into a carriage?'" jokes Grandma Bonnie Werner, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin.

Gourd Ghost Family

THIS FRIGHTFUL FAMILY is a simple centerpiece that's bound to get your guests in the "spirit" of the holiday.

Directions:

1. Cover a Styrofoam disk with dried moss.
2. Use a black marker to draw two small oval eyes and a larger oval mouth on one side of each white gourd as shown in photo above.
3. Press each gourd into moss-covered disk, making sure each stands upright. Glue as needed to hold.

Spiders Spider on Ribbon

THIS TABLE DECORATION will be a "run-away" hit at your Halloween gathering.

Directions:

1. Place a length of wire-edge spider-motif ribbon down the length of a table.
2. Twist four black chenille stems together at the center. Shape each end to make eight spider legs.
3. Place the spiders along the ribbon and add a black tea light candle to the center of each spider.

PB&J Bars (PICTURED ABOVE)

Big and little kids alike will love these delicious four-ingredient bars, which offer a cookie crust, a layer of jam and a crunchy peanut butter and granola topping.

MITZI SENTIFF, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

- 1 package (18 ounces) refrigerated sugar cookie dough, *divided*
- 2/3 cup strawberry jam
- 3/4 cup granola cereal without raisins
- 3/4 cup peanut butter chips

- Line a 9-in. square baking pan with foil and grease the foil. Press two-thirds of the cookie dough into prepared pan. Spread jam over dough to within 1/4 in. of edges. In a mixing bowl, beat the granola, peanut butter chips and remaining dough until blended. Crumble over jam.
- Bake at 375° for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack. Using foil, lift out of pan. Cut into bars and remove from foil. **Yield:** 9-12 servings.

Cocoa Chocolate Chip Cookies (PICTURED AT LEFT)

Crisp outside but chewy inside, these sweet sensations will disappear in a hurry. Our six children and thier friends love these cookies.

MARY DUDEK, ALLIANCE, OHIO

- 2/3 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 package (3.9 ounces) instant chocolate pudding mix
- 2 eggs
- 3 tablespoons water
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 package (12 ounces) miniature semisweet chocolate chips

- In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter, oil and sugars until light and fluffy. Add pudding mix, eggs and water; mix well. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the chocolate mixture (dough will be stiff). Stir in the chocolate chips.
- Roll into 1-in. balls. Place 2 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 9-11 minutes or until set and edges are firm. Cool for 2 minutes before removing to wire racks. **Yield:** about 8-1/2 dozen.

Spooky Spider Snacks

(PICTURED AT RIGHT)

These clever crawlers come together in a snap and, because no baking is involved, children can help from start to finish.

ANDREA CHAPMAN, HELENA, OKLAHOMA

- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 48 butter-flavored crackers
- 1/2 cup chow mein noodles
- 1/4 cup raisins

- Spread 1 teaspoon of peanut butter on the tops of 24 crackers. Place three noodles on each side of each cracker; top with the remaining crackers. Spread a small amount of peanut butter on each raisin; place two on each cracker for eyes. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

Honey Chip Granola Bars (PICTURED BELOW)

I first tried these not-too-sweet bars at my mother-in-law's house. A marshmallow, honey and peanut butter mixture is delicious over crunchy cereal, oats and nuts. Be sure to let the bars cool a bit before pressing the mini chocolate chips on top or they'll melt.

ROSANNA TROYER, MILLERSBURG, OHIO

- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1-½ pounds miniature marshmallows
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ cup peanut butter
- 5 cups old-fashioned oats
- 4-½ cups crisp rice cereal
- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs (about 16 squares)
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup crushed peanuts
- ½ cup miniature chocolate chips

In a large saucepan, combine the butter, oil and marshmallows. Cook and stir over low heat until mixture is melted and smooth. Remove from the heat; stir in honey and peanut butter. Combine the oats, cereal, cracker crumbs, coconut and peanuts. Add to the marshmallow mixture; mix well.

Press into a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. pan. Cool for 10-15 minutes. Sprinkle with chips and gently press into top. Cool completely. Cut into bars. **Yield:** about 4 dozen.

Editor's Note: Reduced-fat or generic brands of peanut butter are not recommended for this recipe.

Cinnamon Caramel Apples

(PICTURED AT RIGHT)

Our Test Kitchen staff used cinnamon and chocolate to give a fun and tasty twist to traditional caramel apples. Rolled in nuts, coconut or colorful candies, they'll delight kids of all ages.

- 2 packages (14 ounces *each*) caramels
- 3 tablespoons milk chocolate chips
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 Popsicle sticks
- 8 large tart apples
- Chocolate-covered toffee bits, finely chopped salted peanuts and cashews, flaked coconut, M&M miniature baking bits *and/or* chocolate sprinkles

In a microwave-safe bowl, combine the caramels, chocolate chips, water, cinnamon and vanilla. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 2 minutes; stir. Microwave 1 minute longer or until caramels are melted.

Insert Popsicle sticks into the apples; dip into caramel mixture, turning to coat. Roll in or press on desired toppings. Place on waxed paper; let stand until set. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Editor's Note: This recipe was tested with Hershey caramels in an 850-watt microwave.

Popcorn Ball Ghosts

THESE GHOULISH GUYS can serve as decorations and then go home with guests as favors.

Directions:

1. Prepare or purchase popcorn balls or Rice Krispies Treats. Insert a wooden skewer into each popcorn ball or mold each Rice Krispies Treat around a skewer.
2. Wrap ball with plastic wrap.
3. Center a white cloth napkin over wrapped ball and fasten with a white chenille stem.
4. Cut out small circles for eyes and small ovals for mouths from black construction paper. Glue eyes and mouths to one side of each ball as shown in photo.
5. Stand each in a glass and drape napkin around to hide the glass.

Spooky Celebrations Made Simple

ARE YOU HOSTING a gruesome get-together for a crew of pint-size goblins? Throwing a children's party this time of year is no reason to be scared silly. Consider these tips and your fall festival will be as easy as pumpkin pie!

- Keep decorations simple...and have the kids pitch in. They'll have fun making tissue paper ghosts and creating paper chains out of orange and black construction paper. Complete the look with inexpensive storebought items, such as spiderwebs, black and orange balloons and crepe paper streamers.
- If you're carving pumpkins before your autumn affair, don't discard the seeds. Wash them and lightly brown in vegetable oil; drain, then place on a baking sheet. Season and bake until crisp. Store the snacks in an airtight container until the party.
- Put a spooky spin on everyday foods by giving them goose bump-inspiring names. If punch is on the menu, call it "Witch's Brew." Bowls of chili might be "Creepy Cauldrons" while a sweet snack mix can be "Graveyard Goodies." Peel seedless grapes and serve them as "Monster Eyeballs."
- For an eerie entree, place English muffin halves on a baking sheet and top with pizza sauce and shredded cheddar cheese. Arrange chopped black olives over the cheese to make jack-o'-lantern faces. Bake until the cheese is melted.
- Let little guests turn sugar cookies or cupcakes into monster morsels. Kids can frost the treats and use gumdrops, licorice and candy corn to create the faces of comical characters. Save time by baking the goodies a day early.

Three-in-One Popcorn Crunch (PICTURED ABOVE)

Folks with a sweet tooth will dig into these bite-size snacks.

CARMA BLOSSER, LIVERMORE, COLORADO

- 4 quarts popped popcorn
- 2 cups dry roasted peanuts
- 1-⅓ cups sugar
- 1-⅓ cups packed brown sugar
- 1 cup dark corn syrup
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1-½ cups candy corn

Place popcorn and peanuts in large buttered heatproof containers or bowls; set aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine the sugars, corn syrup, water, butter and salt. Cook over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 285° (soft-crack stage), stirring occasionally.

Pour over popcorn mixture; stir gently to coat. Stir in candy corn. Drop into bite-size pieces onto waxed paper. Cool completely. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** 6 quarts.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Pumpkin-Face Ice Cream Sandwiches

(PICTURED BELOW AND ON FRONT COVER)

These friendly faces will elicit smiles from friends and family.

PATTIE ANN FORSSBERG, LOGAN, KANSAS

- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1-½ cups confectioners' sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 to 2 tablespoons milk
- Red and yellow liquid food coloring
- 48 round sugar cookies
- 72 raisins
- Red and green decorating icing
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened

In a small mixing bowl, combine the butter, confectioners' sugar, vanilla and enough milk to achieve spreading consistency. Tint orange with red and yellow food coloring. Frost the tops of 24 sugar cookies. Make pumpkin faces, using raisins for eyes and nose. Add a smile with red icing and stem with green icing. Let dry completely.

Spoon ice cream onto bottom of plain cookies; top with frosted cookies. Place in individual plastic bags; seal. Freeze until serving. **Yield:** 2 dozen.

Mousse-Filled Witches' Hats (PICTURED AT LEFT)

These cute chocolate-covered treats will magically disappear at your house. Our Test Kitchen staff had a "spooktacular" time coming up with the rich snacks, featuring sugar cones filled with a creamy homemade mousse. Prepare them for your little goblins this Halloween.

- 1-3/4 cups heavy whipping cream, *divided*
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips
- 4 squares (1 ounce *each*) semisweet chocolate, chopped
- ½ teaspoon shortening
- 1 package (4-3/4 ounces) chocolate sugar ice cream cones
- Halloween sprinkles
- 12 thin chocolate wafers (2-¼-inch diameter)

- For mousse, in a small saucepan, bring ½ cup cream to a boil; remove from the heat. Stir in chocolate chips until smooth. Transfer to a bowl; cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally.
- In a small mixing bowl, beat the remaining cream until stiff peaks form; fold into the chocolate mixture. Cover and refrigerate.
- In a microwave-safe bowl, melt semisweet chocolate and shortening; stir until smooth. Dip pointed tips of ice cream cones a third of the way into melted chocolate; roll in sprinkles. Refrigerate until set. Just before serving, spoon mousse into cones. Top each with a chocolate wafer. Invert onto a serving platter. **Yield:** 1 dozen.

Sugar Spiced Almonds (PICTURED ON PAGE 29)

These zippy almonds are spicy yet sweet, and once you start eating them, you can't stop.

SHERRI JACKSON, CHILLICOTHE, OHIO

- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 cups unblanched whole almonds

- In a bowl, combine the first six ingredients. Add almonds; toss to coat. Spread into a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan. Bake at 250° for 30 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Cool. Store in an airtight container. **Yield:** 2 cups.

Creamy Onion Spread (PICTURED BELOW RIGHT)

My daughter came across this recipe a few years ago, and I have adapted it to our family's tastes.

JANET JOECKS, MENOMONEE FALLS, WISCONSIN

- 1 large sweet onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ cup sliced green onions
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ⅛ to ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¾ cup sour cream
- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup whipped cream cheese
- Additional sliced green onions
- Breadsticks and sweet red and yellow pepper strips

In a skillet, saute onion and garlic in oil for 1 minute. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and cook for 8 minutes or until onion begins to turn golden brown. Add the green onions, salt, pepper and cayenne. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat; cool to room temperature, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small mixing bowl, combine the sour cream, mayonnaise and cream cheese until smooth. Stir in onion mixture. Garnish with additional green onions. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Serve with breadsticks and peppers. **Yield:** about 2 cups.

Cranberry Orange Bread (PICTURED AT RIGHT)

I found this recipe in a children's storybook. Now it's a family favorite.

MARSHA RANSOM, SOUTH HAVEN, MICHIGAN

- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon grated orange peel
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ cup orange juice
- 1 cup chopped fresh *or* frozen cranberries
- 1 cup golden raisins

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Beat in egg and orange peel. Combine the dry ingredients; add to creamed mixture alternately with juice. Fold in cranberries and raisins. Pour into a greased 9-in. x 5-in. x 3-in. loaf pan.

Bake at 350° for 60-65 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes; remove from pan to a wire rack to cool completely. **Yield:** 1 loaf (16 slices).

Herbed Cheese Spread (PICTURED ABOVE)

Flavored with several herbs, this appetizer certainly lives up to its name. It's one of the best cream cheese spreads.

LAUREL LESLIE, SONORA, CALIFORNIA

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 2 teaspoons minced chives
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh chervil *or* ½ teaspoon dried chervil
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¾ teaspoon minced fresh tarragon *or* ¼ teaspoon dried tarragon
- ¼ teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- Assorted crackers

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and butter until smooth. Add the parsley, chives, chervil, garlic, tarragon and lemon-pepper; mix well. Transfer to a serving dish. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight. Remove from the refrigerator 15 minutes before serving. Serve with crackers. **Yield:** 1-½ cups.

Raisin-Nut Baked Apples (PICTURED BELOW)

This is a real autumn-inspired treat. Since these apples cook in the microwave, they're quick to fix anytime.

SUSAN LASKEN, WOODLAND HILLS, CALIFORNIA

- 6 medium Rome *or* Golden Delicious apples
- 6 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 6 tablespoons raisins
- ¼ cup honey
- 1-½ teaspoons ground cinnamon

Core apples; place in a greased 11-in. x 7-in. x 2-in. microwave-safe dish. Fill the center of each apple with walnuts and raisins. Drizzle with honey and sprinkle with cinnamon. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 6 minutes or until apples are tender. **Yield:** 6 servings.

Editor's Note: This recipe was tested in an 850-watt microwave.

Easy Mini Mummies

MAKING "MUMMIES" for Halloween treats was a fun and easy activity for my niece, Nicole Wilbert, 10 (left). To make them, she spread white frosting over Twinkies, leaving a small unfrosted area at one end for the face. For the eyes, she dotted on tube frosting...or added mini chocolate chips and mini M&M's.

Arranged on a big plate of "dirt" (crushed chocolate cookies) with gummy worms, her mummies (left) were spooky and sweet!

SANDI PICHON, SLIDELL, LOUISIANA

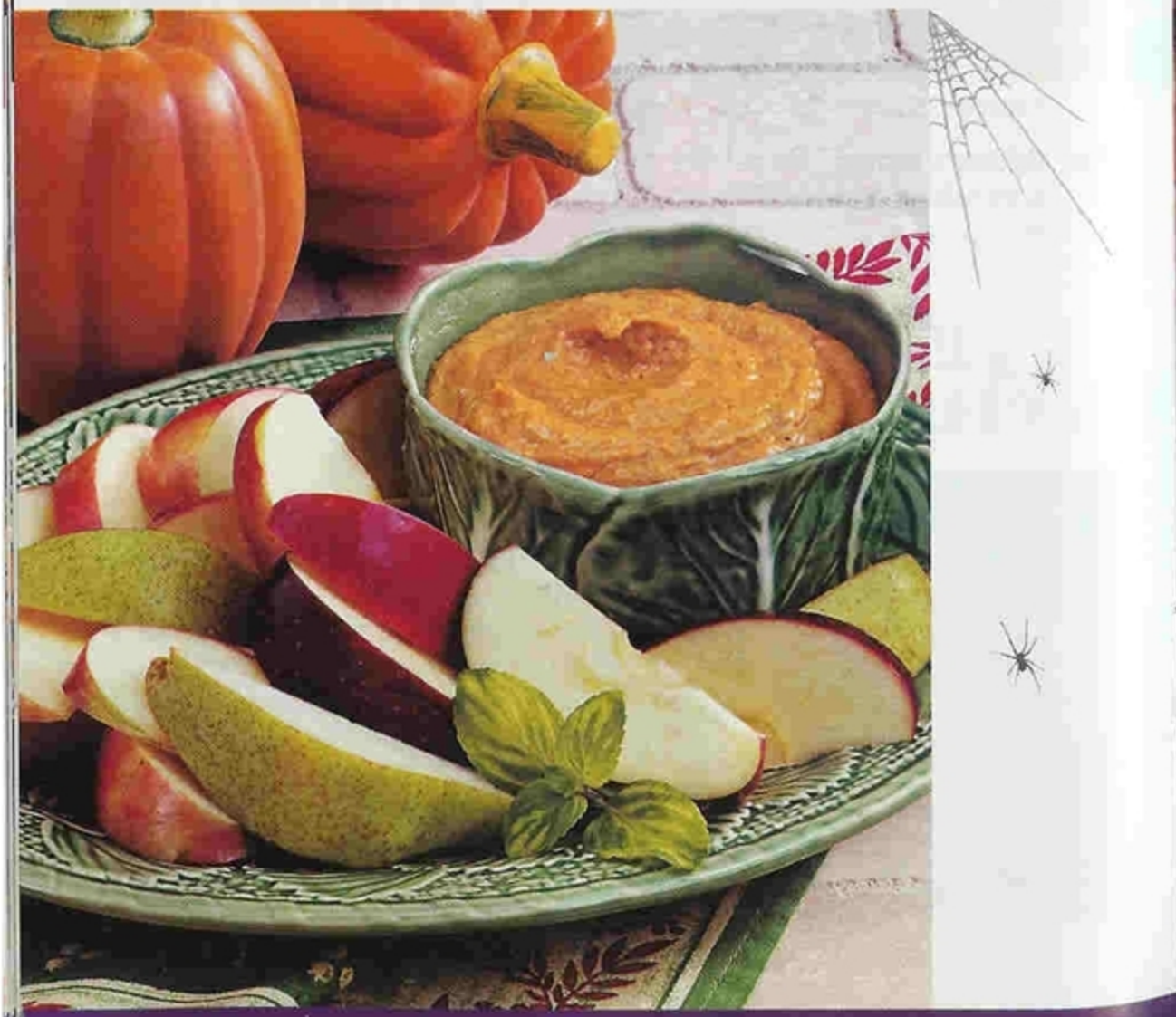
Harvest Pumpkin Dip (PICTURED BELOW)

After trying to make my own pies (and failing miserably with the crust), I decided to try something new with the same great pumpkin pie taste. This creamy dip is the result.

CHRISTY JOHNSON, COLUMBUS, OHIO

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 can (15 ounces) solid-pack pumpkin
- 3 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- Apple and pear slices

In a large mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and confectioners' sugar. Gradually add the pumpkin, pie spice, vanilla and ginger; beat until smooth. Serve with fruit. Refrigerate leftovers. **Yield:** 3-½ cups.

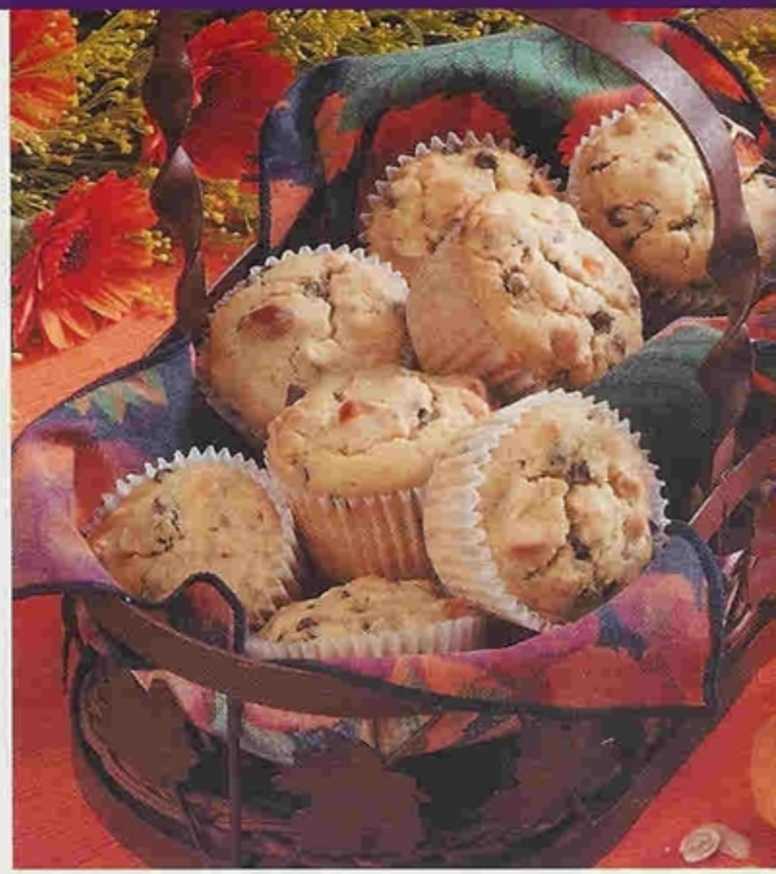


Trail Mix Muffins

(PICTURED AT RIGHT)

These hearty muffins blend stick-to-your-ribs granola, fruit, nuts and chocolate chips. They're perfect for a breakfast on the go or any time you need a lift.

PATRICIA JONES
HUGO, COLORADO



- 2-¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granola cereal without raisins
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- ¾ cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup chopped dry-roasted peanuts
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup chopped dried apricots

In a large bowl, combine the flour, cereal, brown sugar, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, beat the eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in the chips, peanuts, raisins and apricots.

Fill greased or paper-lined muffin cups three-fourths full. Bake at 375° for 15-18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks. Serve warm. **Yield:** about 1-½ dozen.

Spirited Seamstress Has Designs on Halloween

Leila Peltosaari of Chambly, Quebec, knows a few tricks when it comes to Halloween fashions. And the results are sweet treats indeed!

"I'LL ADMIT making trick-or-treating costumes for our children when they were young scared me at first," chuckles Leila (shown below at the sewing machine) "I had a feeling other busy moms could use a hand with some simple-to-sew outfits, too."

Leila put pen to paper and came up with a pattern book chock-full of easy Halloween costumes for kids that can be made quickly with memory-making results.

The 100 "spooktacular" costume ideas are shown in full color with simple patterns, no-sew shortcuts, last-minute costume solutions, treat bags and accessories. To enhance the look of any

costume, Leila shares a handy recipe for homemade makeup (see page 36).

"It's easy to turn curtains into capes, towels into turbans and cardboard into butterfly wings," notes Leila. "With a little imagination, a colander becomes a helmet and a cardboard box can double as a gingerbread house."

In her book, the wide range of costumes includes traditional favorites like Dracula, Frankenstein and a witch, animal costumes, storybook characters, clowns, an astronaut, a Viking, a gypsy, an angel and many more.

Scaring up spellbinding designs is child's play for this former farm girl. "Nature is a great source of ideas—just look at my flower, autumn tree and bumblebee costumes (above)," Leila says.

Benefiting from Leila's high-spirited stitchery are kids from all around the globe. "I get mail orders for my book from across North America and as far away as Africa," she shares. "Many readers send snapshots of their youngsters proudly showing off their mom-made outfits."

Although daughter Rina, 24, and son, Albert, 30, are well beyond the stage when they served as models for her costumes, Leila is pleasantly haunted by the memory whenever she opens her door at Halloween. ▶

"It's always a treat for me to see neighborhood children wearing my designs. I'm ready to grab my candy bag and join them. After all," Leila happily points out, "at Halloween, everyone is a kid again!"

Editor's Note: To order Leila's 142-page pattern book, *Illegally Easy Halloween Costumes for Kids*, send a check for $19.95 (U.S.) or $29.95 (Canada) to TIKKA Books, P.O. Box 203, Chambly PQ Canada J3L 4B3 or phone 1-450/658-6205.

For more information and ideas, see Leila's Web site: www.easyhalloween.com.

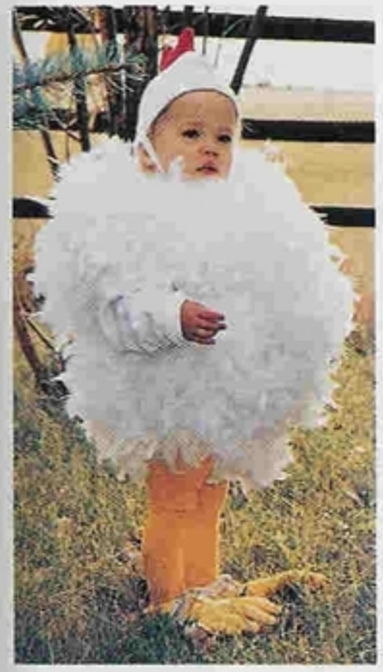
Homemade Makeup

2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon solid shortening

- In a bowl, mix cornstarch and shortening until a smooth white-face makeup is formed.
- After applying, pat skin with cotton balls and baby powder for long-lasting results. If different colors are needed, put small portions of makeup on waxed paper and mix in several drops of food coloring. **Yield:** 1 spooky face.

More Cute Costume Ideas

Check out some Halloween cuties in clever costumes shared by readers.



◀HALLOWEEN HATCHLING
came out of her shell to celebrate. Grandma Shirley Schock, Billings, Montana, jots, "Frankie was so tickled to be a chick."

◀'LEAF IT TO ME!'
Colorful grandson Evan brings piles of smiles to Jean Shervin, Albion, New York.

▲BEWITCHING.
Outfitted for fall in a costume her mom made is 1-year-old Erica Rapheal. The far-from-scary cherub casts a charming spell, confirms Grandmother Janice of White Bear Lake, Minnesota.

▲SWEET PEA.
At 11 months, grandson Morgan is green at trick-or-treating, pens Wanda Ingram, Rome, Georgia. "He looks cute tucked in a pod his mom made," she adds.

Harvest of Fall Fare

WHEN A CHILL is in the air, it's the perfect time to turn to this lineup of fall favorites for family meals or to serve to company. Soon you'll be harvesting compliments!

Chicken with Mushroom Sauce (PICTURED AT LEFT)

This is a fast but special treatment for chicken. Chicken breasts are browned to juicy perfection, then topped with a buttery sauce of fresh mushrooms and green onions.

PATSY JENKINS, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

- 8 bone-in chicken breast halves
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 cup white wine
- 3 tablespoons butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons cold water

In a large skillet, brown chicken in oil. Cover and cook until juices run clear, about 20 minutes. Remove chicken; keep warm. In the same skillet, saute mushrooms and onions until tender. Stir in wine, butter, salt and pepper.

In a small bowl, combine cornstarch and water until smooth; add to skillet. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Return chicken to skillet; heat through. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Lemon Broccoli (PICTURED AT LEFT)

Ideal with most any entree, this time-saving specialty dresses up broccoli, pimientos and onions with a dash of lemon.

TONYA FARMER, IOWA CITY, IOWA

- 3 pounds fresh broccoli, cut into florets
- ¼ cup butter
- 2 tablespoons diced onion
- 2 tablespoons diced pimientos
- 3 to 4 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- ½ teaspoon seasoned salt
- Dash pepper

Add 1 in. of water to a large saucepan; add broccoli. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5-8 minutes or until broccoli is crisp-tender. Meanwhile, melt butter; stir in remaining ingredients. Drain broccoli; add butter mixture and toss to coat. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Pumpkin Orange Cake (PICTURED ON P. 40)

This moist make-ahead spice cake with its flavorful orange frosting is popular at family gatherings. It's simple to prepare and it tastes so good, everyone asks for the recipe.

SHIRLEY GLAAB, HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1-¼ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- ½ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- ½ cup chopped walnuts

ORANGE FROSTING:

- ⅓ cup butter, softened
- 3 cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 2 teaspoons orange juice
- 4-½ teaspoons grated orange peel

Candied orange peel, optional

- In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. In another mixing bowl, beat pumpkin, orange juice, milk and orange peel. Combine dry ingredients; add to creamed mixture alternately with pumpkin mixture. Fold in nuts.
- Pour into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack.
- For frosting, combine butter and confectioners' sugar in a mixing bowl. Beat in the milk, orange juice and peel. Frost cake. Garnish with candied peel if desired. **Yield:** 12 servings.

Place Settings

Leaf a Good Impression

IT'S A BREEZE to bring a splash of color to your table with colorful leaves. Dinner plates wreathed in fall foliage and place markers made from single leaves (as shown in the photo below) make distinctive accompaniments to the tempting menu featured on pages 40-42.

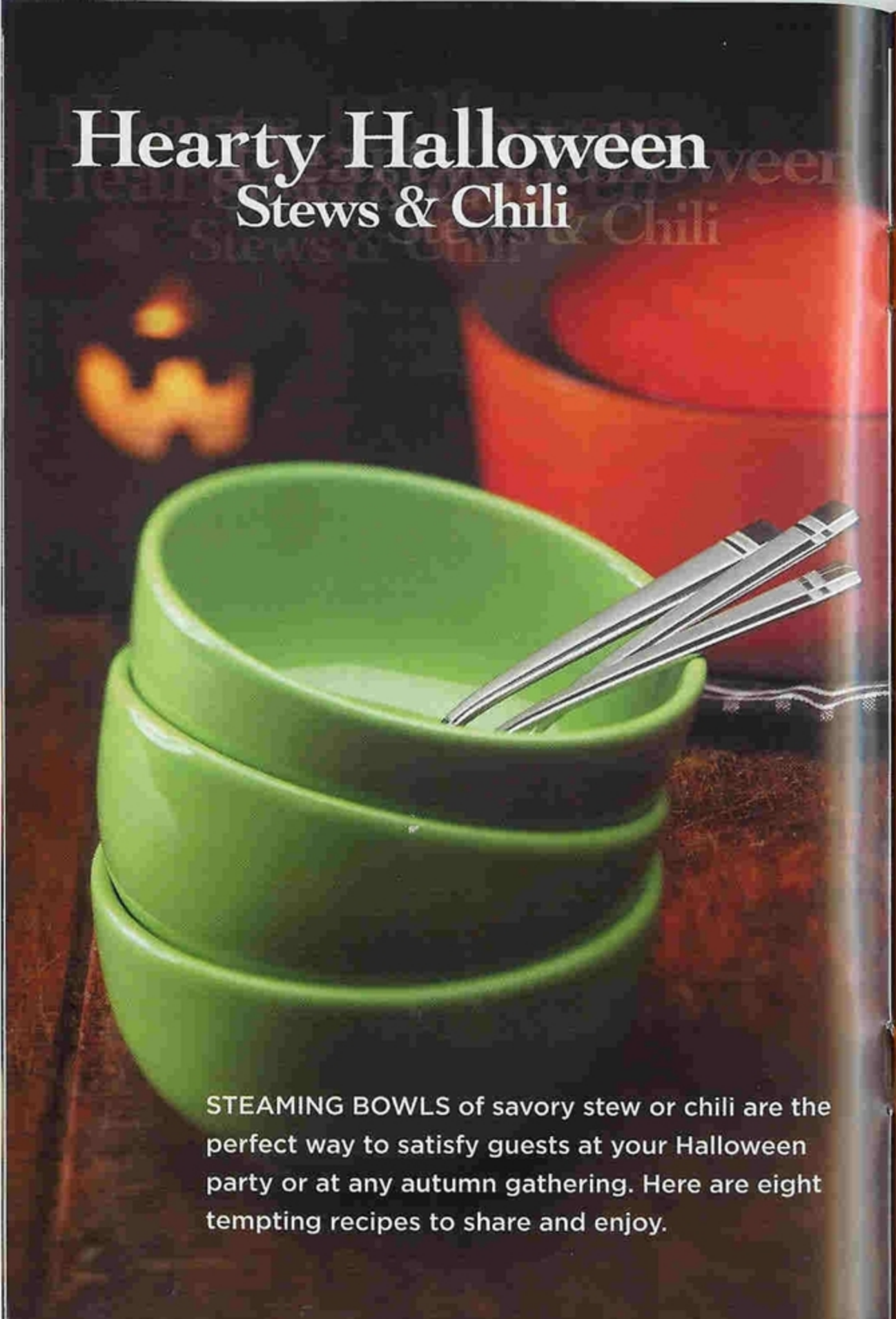
First, gather some brilliant red, orange and gold leaves from your backyard. Leaves that have just fallen and have not had time to curl and dry will work best. Or buy silk leaves at a craft store like we did.

For each place setting, arrange the leaves on your table in a circle with the stems inward. Make the circle large enough so the leaves will peek out from beneath the dinner plate, but small enough so the plate will hold them in place. As you complete each circle, set a plate on it, rearranging the leaves if needed.

To create place markers, write the name of each guest on a leaf. We used a silver metallic marker on a silk leaf.

Then place the markers on top of the plates or tuck them into raffia tied around each cloth napkin.

Hearty Halloween
Stews & Chili



STEAMING BOWLS of savory stew or chili are the perfect way to satisfy guests at your Halloween party or at any autumn gathering. Here are eight tempting recipes to share and enjoy.

Slow-Cooked White Chili

This satisfying slow-simmered chili features chicken, two kinds of beans and crunchy corn. It's quick, easy and tastes great. It's a family favorite that we enjoy with corn bread.

LORI WEBER
WENTZVILLE, MISSOURI

Taste of Home

Chicken Stew

It's convenient to cook and serve this veggie-packed chicken stew from the slow cooker.

LINDA EMERY
TUCKERMAN, ARKANSAS

Taste of Home

FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN

Slow-Cooked White Chili

- ¾ pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cubed
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1-½ cups water
- 1 can (15 ounces) white kidney *or* cannelini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (11 ounces) whole kernel white corn, drained *or* 1-¼ cups frozen shoepeg corn
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chilies
- 1 to 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon granules
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin

In a large skillet, saute chicken, onion and garlic in oil until onion is tender. Transfer to a slow cooker. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or until chicken juices run clear and flavors are blended. Yield: 8 servings.

Chicken Stew

- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 cans (14-½ ounces *each*) chicken broth
- 3 cups cubed peeled potatoes
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1 cup thinly sliced carrots
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon rubbed sage
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
- ¼ cup cold water
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch

In a slow cooker, combine the first 11 ingredients; cover and cook on high for 4 hours. Mix water and cornstarch until smooth; stir into stew. Cook, covered, 30 minutes more or until the vegetables are tender. Yield: 10 servings.

Truly Texan Chili

I am a native Texan, and this is the best chili recipe I've ever tasted—it's meaty and spicy. I'd make this whenever I was "homesick" during the years we spent away from Texas due to my husband's military career.

BETTY BROWN
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

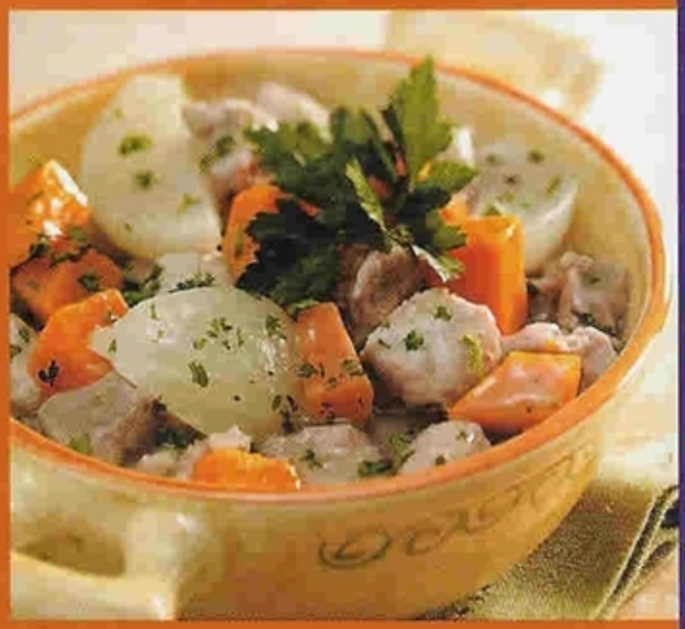
Taste of Home

Sweet Potato Pork Stew

I'm an avid recipe collector and have fun trying new dishes. Fortunately, my family doesn't mind experimenting with new tastes. Everyone loves the blend of flavors in this stew.

SUSAN KLEIN
WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN

Taste of Home



HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN

Truly Texan Chili

- 3 pounds ground beef
- 2 to 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 tablespoons chili powder (*or* to taste)
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 cans (14-½ ounces *each*) beef broth
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 can (15 ounces) pinto beans, drained, optional

Optional garnishes: shredded cheddar cheese, tortilla chips, sour cream *and/or* lime wedges

In a Dutch oven, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink. Drain. Reduce heat; stir in garlic. Combine chili powder, cumin, flour and oregano; sprinkle over meat, stirring until evenly coated. Add broth, salt and pepper; bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 1-1/2 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally.

If desired, add beans and heat through. Garnish individual bowls, if desired, with cheese, tortilla chips, sour cream and/or lime wedges. Yield: 5 servings.

Sweet Potato Pork Stew

- 2 pounds boneless pork, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2-⅓ cups chicken broth
- 4 to 5 small onions, quartered
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup minced fresh parsley

Toss pork and mustard. In a large resealable plastic bag, combine flour and brown sugar; add pork and shake to coat. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, brown pork and garlic in oil.

Add broth; bring to a boil. Scrape bottom of skillet to loosen any browned bits. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add onions, sweet potatoes, salt and pepper; cover and simmer 30 minutes more or until the pork and potatoes are tender. Stir in parsley. Yield: 6-8 servings (2 quarts).

Artichoke Beef Stew

The recipe for this special stew was given to me by a dear friend before she moved to another state. She served it with dumplings, but my husband prefers noodles.

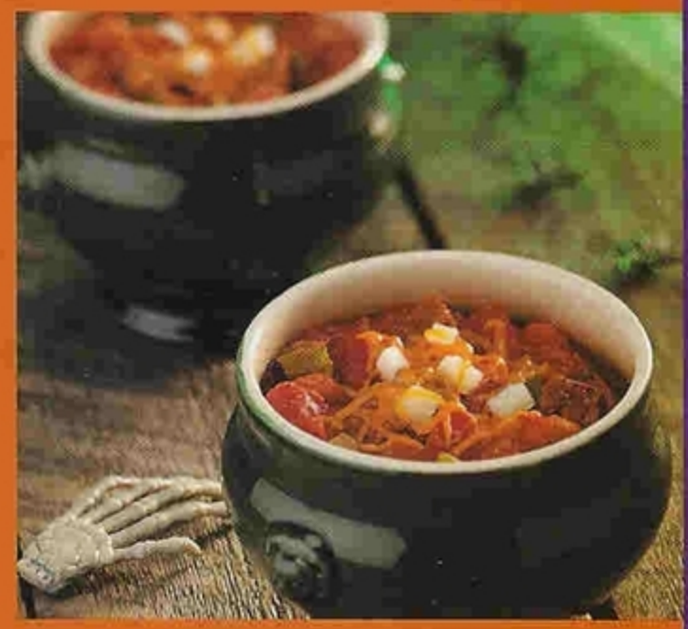
JANELL SCHMIDT
ATHELSTANE, WISCONSIN

Taste of Home

Favorite Chili

I received this recipe from a friend and have modified it to suit my family's tastes. Our three children especially like this slightly sweet chili because it's not too spicy.

CINDI CLINTON
KIMBALL, NEBRASKA



Taste of Home

HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN

Artichoke Beef Stew

- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2-1/2 pounds lean beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 can (10-1/2 ounces) condensed beef consomme, undiluted
- 2 medium onions, halved and sliced
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dill weed
- 2 jars (6-1/2 ounces *each*) marinated artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 20 small fresh mushrooms, halved
- Hot cooked noodles

In a shallow bowl or large resealable plastic bag, combine the flour, salt and pepper. Add beef and toss to coat. In a skillet, brown beef in oil. Transfer to a slow cooker with a slotted spoon. Gradually add consomme to the skillet. Bring to a boil; stir to loosen browned bits from pan. Stir in onions, wine, garlic and dill. Pour over beef.

Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or until the meat is nearly tender. Stir in the artichokes and mushrooms. Cook 30 minutes longer or until heated through. Serve over noodles. Yield: 6-8 servings.

Favorite Chili

- 3-1/2 pounds beef chuck roast, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 3 medium green peppers, chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cans (28 ounces *each*) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cups water
- 1 can (12 ounces) tomato paste
- 1/3 cup chili powder
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 3/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 can (16 ounces) pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup cornmeal
- Shredded cheddar cheese and additional chopped onion, optional

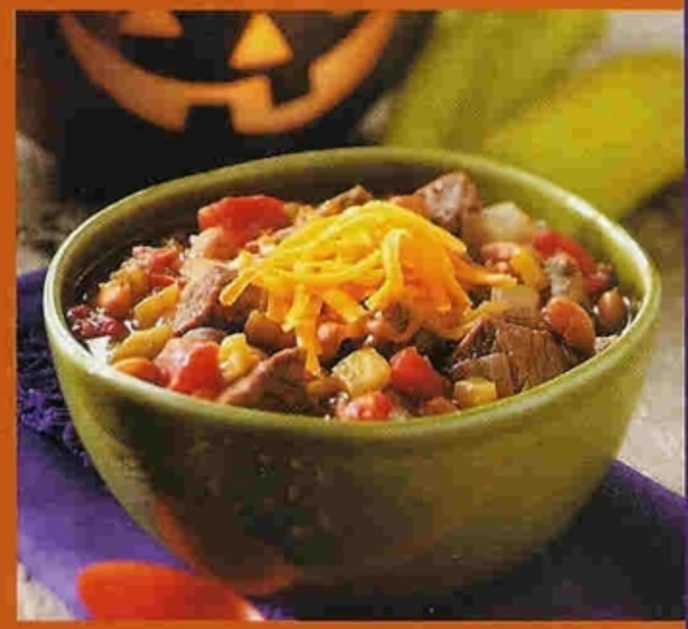
In a Dutch oven or soup kettle, brown beef in oil; drain. Add onions, green peppers and garlic; cook until tender. Add the next eight ingredients; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 2 hours, stirring occasionally.Add beans and cornmeal; simmer for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Garnish with cheese and onion if desired. Yield: 14-16 servings (4 quarts).

Green Chili Stew

This stew is much heartier than most—and very tasty, too. Men especially enjoy the zippy broth and generous amounts of tender beef. They frequently request second helpings.

JACQUELINE THOMPSON GRAVES, LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA

Taste of Home



Pumpkin Chili

This unique chili freezes well...but it still doesn't last around our farmhouse very long, especially when my five children and 13 grandchildren are around! They often are—we are a very close-knit family.

BETTY BUTLER GREENCASTLE, INDIANA

Taste of Home

FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FUN HALLOWEEN FOOD & FU

Green Chili Stew

- **2 pounds beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes**
- **2 medium onions, chopped**
- **2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- **1 can (15 ounces) pinto beans, rinsed and drained**
- **1 can (14-½ ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained**
- **2 cans (4 ounces *each*) chopped green chilies**
- **1 cup water**
- **3 beef bouillon cubes**
- **1 garlic clove, minced**
- **1 teaspoon sugar**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **¼ teaspoon pepper**
- **Shredded cheddar cheese, optional**

In a skillet, brown beef and onions in oil; drain. Transfer to a 5-qt. slow cooker. Combine beans, tomatoes, chilies, water, bouillon, garlic, sugar, salt and pepper; pour over beef.

Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or until beef is tender. Sprinkle with cheese if desired. Yield: 8 servings.

Pumpkin Chili

- **3 pounds ground beef**
- **1 medium onion, chopped**
- **1 cup canned pumpkin**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **1 teaspoon pepper**
- **2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice**
- **2 cans (10-¾ ounces *each*) condensed tomato soup, undiluted**
- **2 cans (16 ounces *each*) hot chili beans**
- **2 bottles (12 ounces *each*) chili sauce**
- **1 teaspoon sugar**
- **1 teaspoon chili powder**

In a large Dutch oven or soup kettle, cook ground beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Add remaining ingredients; stir to mix well. Add water if desired to reduce thickness. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 1 hour. Yield: 10-12 servings (11 cups).

Savor Fragrance of Citrus Centerpiece

GREET GUESTS WITH THE CITRUSY scent of freshly zested oranges when this sunny arrangement takes center stage at your dinner party. It's simple to assemble with colorful fruit from the produce section of your grocery store.

We used a kitchen tool called a citrus zester to create simple designs on a few oranges, but you can use this technique to decorate limes and lemons, too.

To create a spiral design, start at one end of an orange. Use the zester to create a circular path around the fruit, removing peel until you get to the opposite end of the orange.

Feel free to remove the peel in one long strip or in shorter strips if that's easier for you.

For a different design, try removing evenly spaced strips of peel from one end of the orange to the other. Or try your hand at making other simple patterns.

Peel can be stored in the refrigerator to use in recipes or to garnish refreshing summer drinks.

Now, arrange the zested oranges and other colorful fruit in a footed bowl. In addition to lemons and limes, we filled out the arrangement with green and red pears.

For a finishing touch, tuck some greenery between the pieces of fruit and around the edge of the bowl (see photo above) for a festive and fragrant centerpiece.

Ginger Squash Soup (PICTURED ABOVE)

Everyone likes the lovely golden color and creamy consistency of this soup. A touch of ginger sparks the mild squash flavor.

LAUREL LESLIE, SONORA, CALIFORNIA

- 3 cups chicken broth
- 2 packages (10 ounces *each*) frozen cooked winter squash, thawed
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream

In a large saucepan, simmer broth and squash. Add the applesauce, sugar, ginger and salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; stir in cream. Cook for 30 minutes or until soup reaches desired consistency, stirring occasionally. **Yield:** 6 servings.

Rosemary Plum Pork Roast (PICTURED AT LEFT)

Slices of this delicious stuffed pork roast make such a pretty presentation.

LAUREL LESLIE, SONORA, CALIFORNIA

- 16 pitted dried plums
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 bunches fresh rosemary, *divided*
- 1 center-cut boneless pork loin roast (about 2 pounds)
- ½ teaspoon salt, *divided*
- ½ teaspoon coarse ground pepper, *divided*

Place plums in a bowl; add boiling water. Let stand for 15 minutes; drain well. Mince enough rosemary to measure 1 tablespoon; stir into plums. Cut a slit along top of roast 2 in. deep, leaving 1 in. at each end uncut. Sprinkle inside of cut with ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper. Fill with plum mixture. Cover top with overlapping rosemary sprigs.

Tie roast at 1-in. intervals with kitchen string. Sprinkle with the remaining salt and pepper. Place several rosemary sprigs in a shallow roasting pan. Top with roast. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 1 to 1-¼ hours or until a meat thermometer reads 160°. Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing. **Yield:** 6 servings.

Green Beans with Basil (PICTURED AT LEFT)

These special beans have great herb flavor that complements any entree.

LAUREL LESLIE, SONORA, CALIFORNIA

- 1 pound fresh green beans
- ¼ cup water
- 2 to 3 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1-½ teaspoons minced fresh rosemary *or* ½ teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- 1-½ teaspoons minced fresh basil *or* ½ teaspoon dried basil

Place beans and water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil; cook, uncovered, for 7 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain; add the remaining ingredients. Cover and cook for 4 minutes or until vegetables are tender. **Yield:** 6 servings.

Apple Spice Bundt Cake (PICTURED ON P. 54)

Not too sweet and not too heavy, this cake is perfect for this season. It has a mild fruit flavor and pleasant spice level.

LAUREL LESLIE, SONORA, CALIFORNIA

- 1/3 cup butter, softened
- 1/3 cup shortening
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 2 eggs
- 1-1/4 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans, toasted
- 2/3 cup finely chopped peeled tart apple

BROWN SUGAR GLAZE:

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
- 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans, toasted

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter, shortening, sugars and lemon peel until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, cinnamon, baking soda, allspice, nutmeg and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with applesauce. Stir in the pecans and apple.

Pour into a greased and floured 9- or 10-in. fluted tube pan. Bake at 350° for 55-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes; remove from pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

For glaze, in a heavy saucepan, melt butter and brown sugar over low heat. Stir in cream. Cook and stir until mixture comes to a boil; boil for 1 minute. Remove from the heat; whisk in sugar and vanilla until smooth, about 1 minute. Pour over cake; immediately sprinkle with pecans. **Yield:** 12 servings.

Apple Chicken and Rice (PICTURED ABOVE)

The first time we tried this lightly sweet chicken, I knew I'd be making it for a long time to come. I serve it with a salad and bread.

NADENE MACLEOD, SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons butter, *divided*
- 1 package (6 ounces) chicken-flavored rice mix
- 1-1/4 cups water
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup apple juice
- 1 medium apple, chopped
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries *or* raisins

In a large skillet, cook chicken in 1 tablespoon butter until juices run clear; remove and keep warm. Set seasoning packet from rice mix aside. In the same skillet, saute rice mix in remaining butter for 5 minutes or until golden brown.

Add the water, broth, apple juice, apple, mushrooms, onion, cranberries and contents of rice seasoning packet; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes or until rice is tender, stirring occasionally. Return chicken to the pan; heat through. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Curried Beef With Dumplings

(PICTURED AT LEFT)

I like making this hearty pot roast in winter and serving leftovers the next day. It's not only easy to prepare, but the aroma is just wonderful while it's cooking.

JANELL SCHMIDT
ATHELSTANE, WISCONSIN

- 1 boneless beef rump roast (3 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 medium carrots, cut into chunks
- 1 can (14-½ ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt, *divided*
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup hot water
- 1-⅔ cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 tablespoons cold butter
- ¾ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped pimientos

In a Dutch oven, brown roast in oil on all sides; drain. Combine the carrots, tomatoes, onion, curry powder, sugar, 1 teaspoon salt and Worcestershire sauce; pour over roast. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and cook for 2-½ hours or until the meat and carrots are tender.

Remove roast and carrots; keep warm. Add hot water to pan; bring to a boil. For dumplings, combine flour, baking powder and remaining salt in a large bowl. Cut in butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stir in the milk, parsley and pimientos just until moistened.

Drop by tablespoonfuls onto simmering liquid. Cover and cook for 15 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in a dumpling comes out clean (do not lift cover while simmering). Remove dumplings. Strain cooking juices; serve with roast, dumplings and carrots. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Apple-Glazed Pork Chops (PICTURED BELOW)

Simple enough for weeknights yet impressive enough for guests, these juicy chops from the *Taste of Home* Test Kitchen are topped with a glaze of herbs, apple cider and brown sugar. The cooked apple slices and onions will make it a fast favorite in your home.

- 4 bone-in pork chops (¾ inch thick)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup apple cider *or* apple juice
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar, *divided*
- ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon cold water
- 2 large tart apples, sliced
- ½ cup sliced onion
- 2 tablespoons butter

In a large skillet, brown pork chops in oil. Add the cider, 1 tablespoon brown sugar, rosemary, salt and thyme. Cover and cook for 7-8 minutes or until meat juices run clear. Combine the cornstarch and water until smooth; add to the skillet. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 1-2 minutes or until thickened.

Meanwhile, in another skillet, cook the apples, onion, butter and remaining brown sugar over medium heat for 3-4 minutes or until apples are softened. Serve over pork chops. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Chicken Potpie (PICTURED BELOW RIGHT)

Chock-full of chicken, potatoes, peas and corn, this autumn favorite makes two golden pies, so you can serve one at supper and save the other for a busy night. They're perfect for company or a potluck.

KAREN JOHNSON, TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA

- 2 cups diced peeled potatoes
- 1-3/4 cups sliced carrots
- 2/3 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1-3/4 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 3/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1-1/2 cups milk
- 4 cups cubed cooked chicken
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup frozen corn
- Pastry for two double-crust pies (9 inches)

- Place potatoes and carrots in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 8-10 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and set aside. In a large skillet, saute onion in butter until tender. Stir in the flour, salt, thyme and pepper until blended. Gradually stir in broth and milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Add the chicken, peas, corn, potatoes and carrots; remove from the heat.
- Line two 9-in. pie plates with bottom pastry; trim even with edge of plate. Fill pastry shells with chicken mixture. Roll out remaining pastry to fit top of pies. Cut slits or decorative cutouts in pastry. Place over filling; trim, seal and flute edges.
- Bake one potpie at 425° for 35-40 minutes or until crust is lightly browned. Let stand for 15 minutes before cutting. Cover and freeze remaining potpie for up to 3 months. **Yield:** 2 pot-pies (6-8 servings each).
- **To use frozen potpie:** Shield frozen pie crust edges with foil; place on a baking sheet. Bake at 425° for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°; bake 70-80 minutes longer or until crust is golden brown.

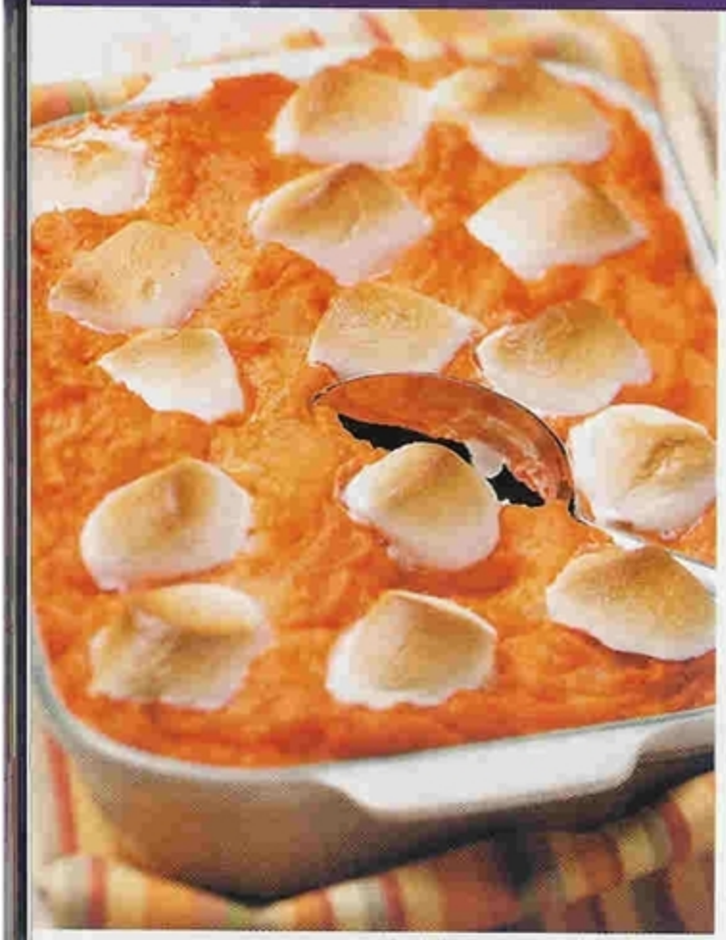
Coconut Pumpkin Loaves (PICTURED BELOW LEFT)

A friend made this moist bread for us years ago. Because it makes three loaves, I can give one loaf to a neighbor, enjoy one with my family and freeze one for later.

ANNE SMITHSON, CARY, NORTH CAROLINA

- 5 eggs
- 2 cups canned pumpkin
- 2 cups sugar
- 1-1/4 cups vegetable oil
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 packages (3.4 ounces *each*) instant coconut pudding mix
- 3 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans

- In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs and pumpkin until smooth. Add sugar and oil; mix well. Combine the flour, pudding mixes, cinnamon, baking soda and nutmeg; add to the pumpkin mixture. Stir in nuts.
- Transfer to three greased and floured 8-in. x 4-in. x 2-in. loaf pans. Bake at 350° for 60-65 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Wrap and freeze for up to 6 months. **Yield:** 3 loaves.



Sweet Potato Casserole

(PICTURED AT LEFT)

Pineapple, sugar and marshmallows lend a super sweetness to sweet potatoes. I've been making this casserole for years, both for special occasions at home and for casual dinners.

RUTH LEACH
SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

- 6 medium sweet potatoes
- ½ cup butter, cubed
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 can (20 ounces) crushed pineapple, drained
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 15 large marshmallows

Place sweet potatoes in a large kettle and cover with water; bring to a boil. Boil gently until potatoes can easily be pierced with the tip of a sharp knife, about 30-45 minutes. Drain; cool slightly. Peel potatoes and place in a large bowl; mash. Stir in butter and sugar until butter is melted. Add pineapple, eggs, vanilla, nutmeg and salt.

Spoon into a greased 2-qt. baking dish. Top with marshmallows. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Harvest Potato Casserole (PICTURED BELOW)

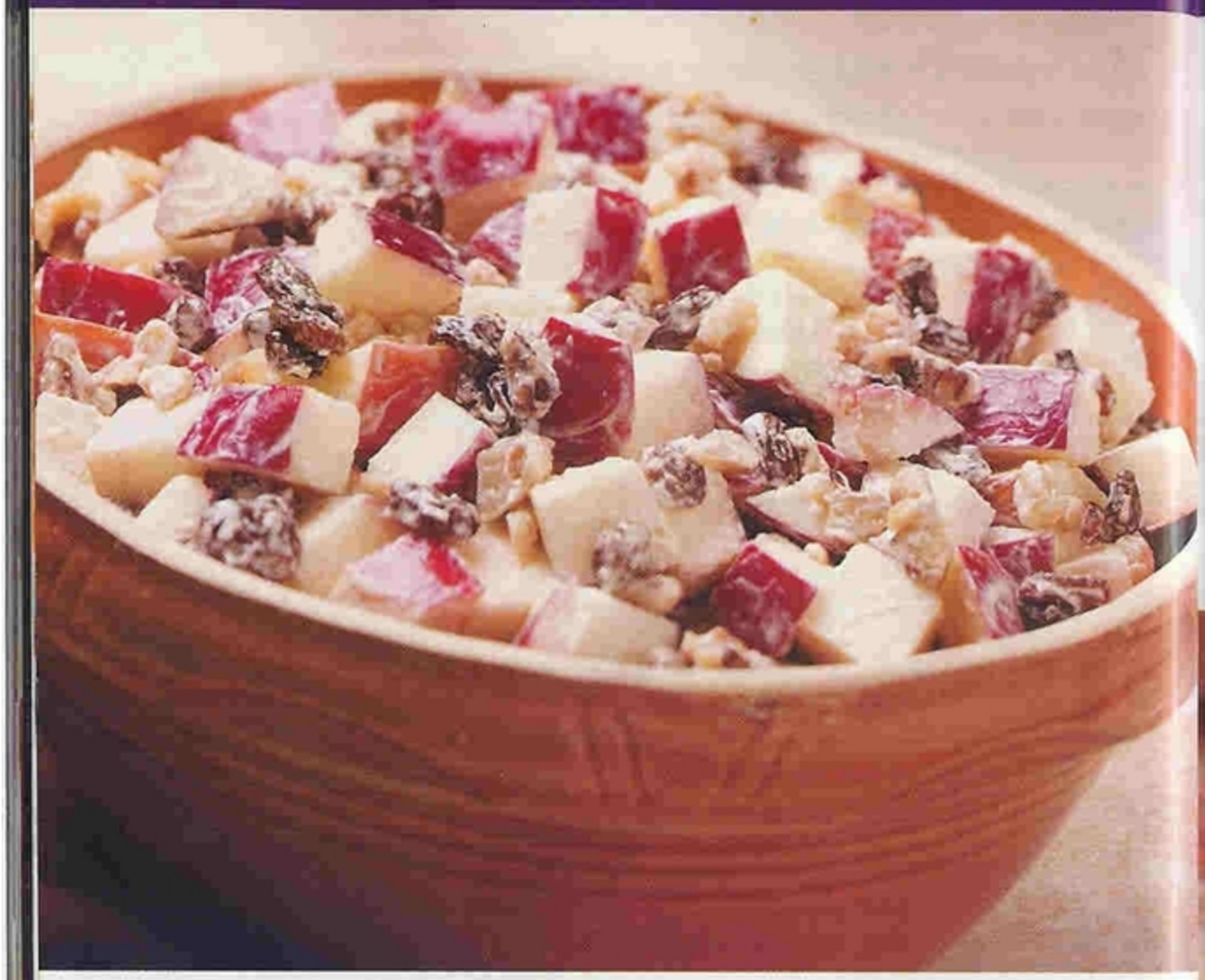
Sour cream and cream of chicken soup lend to the creamy texture of this tried-and-true casserole. My family prefers this to traditional mashed potatoes.

MRS. ROBERT CODY, DALLAS, TEXAS

- 8 large potatoes
- 2 bay leaves
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups (16 ounces) sour cream
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese, *divided*
- 1 can (10-¾ ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1 jar (2 ounces) diced pimientos, drained
- 4 green onions, chopped
- ½ cup crushed cornflakes

Place potatoes and bay leaves in a Dutch oven or large kettle; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until tender. Remove from the heat; cool to room temperature. Place in the freezer (still covered by the cooking water) for 1 hour.

Drain potatoes; peel and grate. Place in a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish. Drizzle with butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper; toss to coat. Combine the sour cream, soup, 1 cup cheese, pimientos and onions; spread over potatoes. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese; top with cornflakes (dish will be full). Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 45-50 minutes or until bubbly. **Yield:** 12-15 servings.



Crunchy Apple Salad (PICTURED ABOVE)

This old-fashioned salad is part of my favorite meal that Mom used to make. Crunchy apples, celery and walnuts blend well with the creamy mayonnaise.

JULIE PEARSALL, UNION SPRINGS, NEW YORK

- 4 large red apples, diced
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup mayonnaise

In a large bowl, combine the apples, celery, raisins and walnuts. Blend in mayonnaise. Cover and refrigerate until serving. **Yield:** 16 servings.

Frosty Cranberry Salad Cups (PICTURED BELOW)

Instead of traditional cranberry sauce, consider these individual fruit salads. They're a make-ahead treat terrific for potlucks.

BERNADINE BOLTE, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

- 1 can (16 ounces) jellied cranberry sauce
- 1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- ¼ cup confectioners' sugar
- ¾ cup miniature marshmallows
- Red food coloring, optional

In a bowl, combine all ingredients. Fill paper- or foil-lined muffin cups two-thirds full. Cover and freeze until firm, about 3 hours. **Yield:** 16 servings.

Tender Dinner Knots (PICTURED BELOW)

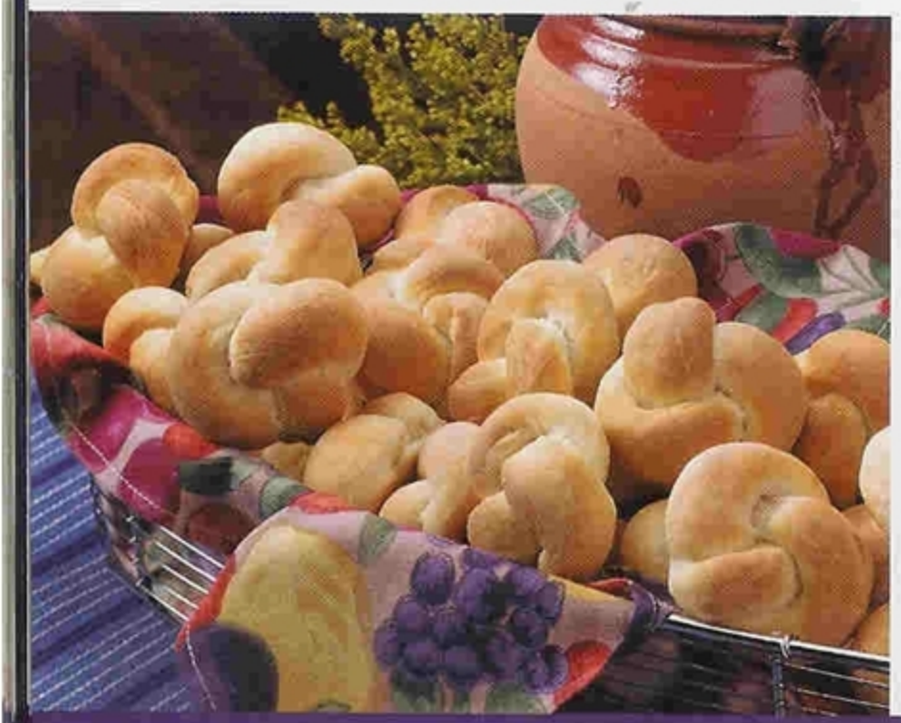
These yummy yeast rolls will dress up any meal. The cute knots look like you fussed, but the dough is so easy to work with that they're a cinch to shape. Folks are bound to be asking for seconds.

RENAE MONCUR, BURLEY, IDAHO

- 1 package (¼ ounce) active dry yeast
- ¼ cup warm water (110° to 115°)
- 1 cup warm milk (110° to 115°)
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3-½ to 4 cups all-purpose flour

In a large mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add the milk, egg, sugar, shortening, salt and 2 cups flour. Beat until smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough. Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; shape into 32 pieces. To form knots, roll each piece into a 10-in. rope; tie each into a knot and tuck ends under. Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 25 minutes. Bake at 400° for 13-16 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks. **Yield:** 32 rolls.



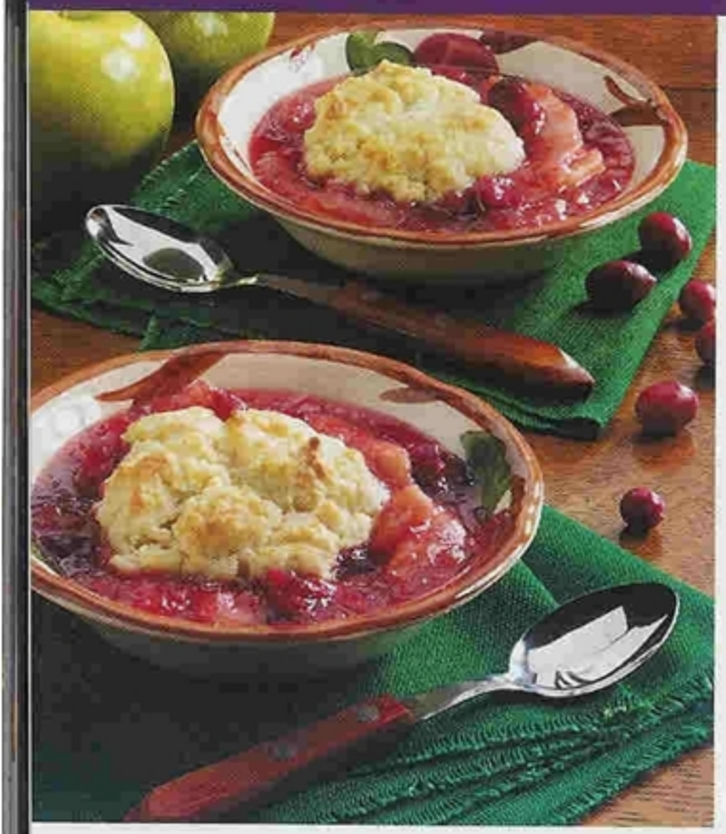
Buttermilk Corn Bread (PICTURED ABOVE)

The tattered recipe card for this corn bread proves it's been a family favorite for years. Although my daughters enjoy it anytime, they mostly request it at Thanksgiving.

JUDY SELLGREN, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

- 1-¼ cups cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ⅔ cup packed brown sugar
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1 cup buttermilk
- ¾ cup vegetable oil

In a mixing bowl, combine cornmeal, flour, sugars, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, beat the egg, buttermilk and oil; stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Pour into a greased 9-in. round or square baking pan (pan will be full). Bake at 425° for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Serve warm. **Yield:** 8-9 servings.



Apple Cranberry Cobbler

(PICTURED AT LEFT)

My family enjoys the sweetness of the apples as well as the tartness of the cranberries in this old-fashioned treat. It's a great dessert to make during the peak of apple season.

REGINA STOCK
TOPEKA, KANSAS

- 5 cups sliced peeled tart apples
- 1-¼ cups sugar
- 1 cup fresh *or* frozen cranberries
- 3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons butter

TOPPING:

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup cold butter
- ¼ cup milk

In a large saucepan, combine the apples, sugar, cranberries, tapioca, cinnamon and water. Let stand for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture comes to a full boil. Cook and stir 3 minutes longer. Pour into a greased 2-qt. baking dish. Dot with butter.

In a bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in butter until crumbly. Stir in milk to form a soft dough. Drop dough by tablespoonfuls over hot apple mixture. Bake, uncovered, at 375° for 30-35 minutes or until topping is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into topping comes out clean. **Yield:** 8 servings.

Sweet Potato Custard Pie (PICTURED BELOW)

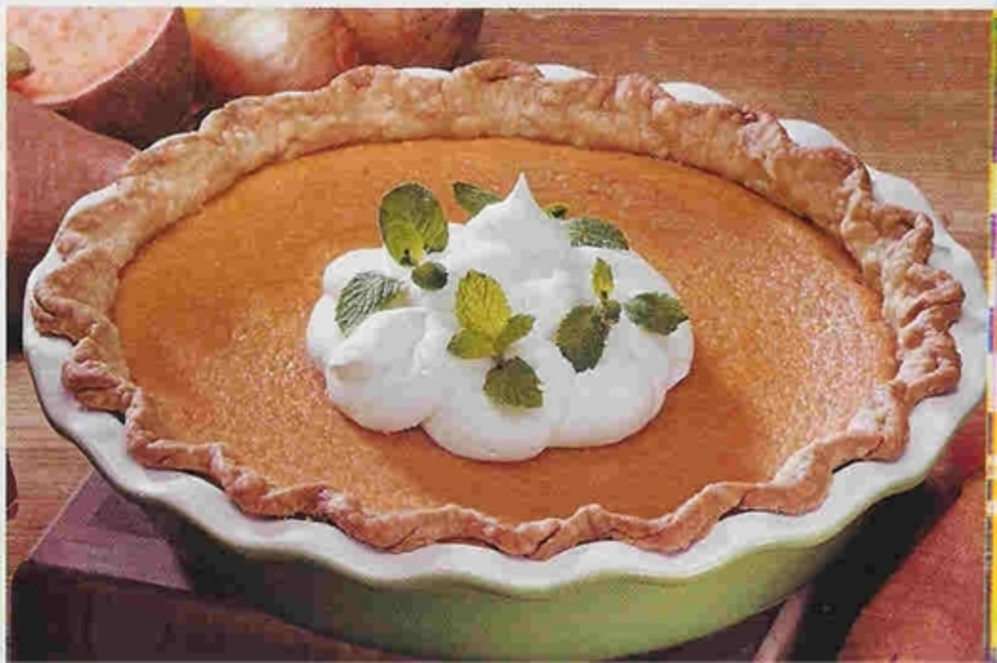
I love to bake and experiment with ingredients. I came up with a hit when I developed this deliciously different pie.

KATHY ROBERTS, NEW HEBRON, MISSISSIPPI

- 2 small sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
- ¾ cup marshmallow creme
- ½ cup butter, cubed
- 1 can (5 ounces) evaporated milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon almond extract
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 unbaked pastry shell (9 inches)
- ½ cup whipped topping

Place the sweet potatoes in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10 minutes or until tender. Drain potatoes and place in a large mixing bowl; mash. Add marshmallow creme and butter; beat until smooth. Add milk, eggs and extracts; mix well.

Combine sugars, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg; gradually beat into potato mixture until well blended. Pour into pastry shell. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Serve with whipped topping. Refrigerate leftovers. **Yield:** 8 servings.



Orange Spice Cake (PICTURED BELOW)

I like to serve slices of this gingerbread-like cake with whipped topping, but it's just as delicious plain.

CONNIE SIMON, REED CITY, MICHIGAN

- 1-2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup orange marmalade
- Whipped topping, optional

In a bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Combine the orange juice, molasses, oil and egg; add to dry ingredients and stir just until combined. Pour into a greased 9-in. square baking pan.

Bake at 350° for 16-20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Spoon marmalade over warm cake. Cool on a wire rack. Serve with whipped topping if desired. **Yield:** 9 servings.

German Chocolate Bars (PICTURED ABOVE)

My mom gave me this recipe at Christmas when I wanted to make something simple, different and yummy for gifts. The chewy bars can be cut into larger pieces, but they're very rich.

JENNIFER SHARP, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

- 1 package (18-1/4 ounces) German chocolate cake mix
- 2/3 cup cold butter
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 can (15 ounces) coconut-pecan frosting
- 1/4 cup milk

Place cake mix in a bowl; cut in butter until crumbly. Press 2-1/2 cups into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes; immediately sprinkle with chocolate chips. Drop frosting by tablespoonfuls over the chips. Stir milk into the remaining crumb mixture; drop by teaspoonfuls over top.

Bake 25-30 minutes longer or until bubbly around the edges and top is cracked. Cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate for 4 hours before cutting. **Yield:** 4 dozen.

Scrappy Scarecrows

WAIST WATCHER. The ground-level garden guard keeping an eye out for raiding critters is the homegrown helper Barbara Muff and her husband, Roger, fashioned in Callaway, Minnesota. "When deer started having breakfast in our flower beds, we decided to construct this plywood pal," she says. "We dressed him in old straw hat, flannel shirt and ear-to-ear grin to give him one-of-a-kind personality."

BIRDS BEWARE when this vigilant pair's on duty in Betti Paull's garden. "The little log dog I crafted makes a comical companion to the farmhand I built around a dress form," Betti writes from Grand Haven, Michigan. "I found the scarecrow's clothes, mask and pitchfork at garage sales and made blond hair from a mop. He's not handsome, but he is one hard worker."

STUFFY COUPLE'S not much for talking...but they're quite the conversation piece! " 'Henry' and 'Martha' look so realistic sitting outside our shop, folks often wave," confirms clever matchmaker Alene Dial, Springfield, Oregon. "I've thought of rigging up their arms to return the greeting so people won't think they're rude."

IN HIGH SPIRITS—that's how crafty lady Esther Gambonini of Petaluma, California feels when she conjures up one of these spooky cuties. "I never know where they'll materialize—in yards, gardens or on front porches," she notes about ghostly hosts she's turned out for family, friends, craft shows.

THE GARDEN CHARMER Loie Burbey raised from clay pots has an easy row to hoe in Berlin, Wisconsin. "She inherited my old garden clothes and favorite coffee cup. Even her hair's my color...so people do look twice," she shares. "Our spaniel, 'Woody', tries all manner of dog antics to get her to move. He thinks she's taking too long a break from weeding!"

Sweet Halloween Treats

DON'T BE AFRAID...to share any of these howling-good seasonal treats. But beware, they may disappear right before your eyes.

Spiderweb Cheesecake (PICTURED ABOVE)

The trick to this tempting treat is pulling a toothpick through rings of melted chocolate to create the web effect. This no-bake cream cheese pie goes together quickly and tastes delicious. It's fun to serve, too, because it never fails to draw comments.

JAN WHITE, PLAINVIEW, NEBRASKA

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- ¼ cup cold water
- 2 packages (8 ounces *each*) cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 chocolate crumb crust (8 *or* 9 inches)
- 2 tablespoons semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon butter

In a small saucepan, sprinkle gelatin over water; let stand for 1 minute. Heat gelatin; stir until dissolved. Remove from the heat; cool slightly. In a mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Gradually beat in cream, vanilla and gelatin mixture until smooth. Pour into crust.

In a microwave, melt chocolate chips and butter; stir until smooth. Transfer to a heavy-duty resealable plastic bag; cut a small hole in a corner of bag. Pipe a circle of chocolate in center of cheesecake. Pipe evenly spaced thin concentric circles about ½ in. apart over filling. Beginning with the center circle, gently pull a toothpick through circles toward the outer edge. Wipe toothpick clean. Repeat to complete web pattern. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before cutting. **Yield:** 6-8 servings.

Jack-o'-Lantern Brownies (PICTURED AT LEFT)

Hosting a Halloween party? Use a cookie cutter to easily cut these homemade chocolate brownies into pumpkin shapes, then give them personality with orange, black and green frosting. Our grandchildren thought these were great!

FLO BURTNETT, GAGE, OKLAHOMA

- 1-½ cups sugar
- ¾ cup butter, melted
- 1-½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 eggs
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup baking cocoa
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 can (16 ounces) vanilla frosting
- Orange paste food coloring
- Green and black decorating gel
- Candy corn and M&M's

In a large mixing bowl, combine the sugar, butter and vanilla. Beat in the eggs until well blended. Combine the flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt; gradually add to sugar mixture. Line a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan with waxed paper; grease the paper. Spread batter evenly in pan. Bake at 350° for 18-22 minutes or until brownies begin to pull away from sides of pan. Cool on a wire rack.

Run a knife around edge of pan. Invert brownies onto a work surface and remove waxed paper. Cut brownies with a 3-in. pumpkin cookie cutter, leaving at least ⅛ in. between each shape. (Discard scraps or save for another use.) Tint frosting with orange food coloring; frost brownies. Use green gel to create the pumpkin stems and black gel and candy corn and M&M's to decorate the faces. **Yield:** about 1 dozen.

Coconut Chocolate Cake (PICTURED BELOW)

I tuck a coconut filling into this moist chocolate Bundt cake. It's easy to assemble with convenience products, including a boxed cake mix, instant pudding mix and canned frosting.

RENEE SCHWEBACH, DUMONT, MINNESOTA

- 4 eggs
- ¾ cup vegetable oil
- ¾ cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 package (18-1/4 ounces) chocolate cake mix
- 1 package (3.9 ounces) instant chocolate pudding mix

FILLING:

- 2 cups flaked coconut
- ⅓ cup sweetened condensed milk
- ¼ teaspoon almond extract
- 1 can (16 ounces) chocolate frosting

In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs, oil, water and vanilla. Add the cake and pudding mixes; beat for 5 minutes. Pour 3 cups into a greased and floured 10-in. fluted tube pan. Combine the coconut, milk and extract; mix well. Drop by spoonfuls onto batter. Cover with remaining batter.

Bake at 350° for 50-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely. Frost with chocolate frosting. **Yield:** 12-15 servings.

Chocolate Chunk Cookies

(PICTURED AT RIGHT)

It's such a pleasure to serve delicious cookies like these to neighbors and family. I love to bake cookies more than anything else. My four young daughters are eager to help with the mixing, measuring and stirring!

ELAINE ANDERSON
ALIQUIPPA, PENNSYLVANIA

- 6 squares (1 ounce *each*) white baking chocolate, *divided*
- 1 cup butter, softened
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2-½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 package (11-½ ounces) semisweet chocolate chunks *or* 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Melt three squares of white chocolate; cool. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugars. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in melted chocolate and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Stir in semisweet chocolate chunks.

Drop by tablespoonfuls onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Cool for 1 minute before removing to wire racks. Melt remaining white chocolate; drizzle over cookies. **Yield:** 3 dozen.

Spiderweb Pumpkin Cheesecake (PICTURED ABOVE)

This spiced cheesecake makes an appearance on my Halloween table every year. Folks get a kick out of the candy web and chocolate spiders.

BEV KOTOWICH, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

- 1-3/4 cups chocolate wafer crumbs (about 28 wafers)
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

FILLING:

- 3 packages (8 ounces *each*) cream cheese, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 can (15 ounces) solid-pack pumpkin
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice

TOPPING:

- 2 cups (16 ounces) sour cream
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

SPIDERWEB GARNISH:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/3 cup water
- 4 squares (1 ounce *each*) semisweet chocolate, melted

- Combine wafer crumbs and butter; press onto the bottom and 1 in. up the sides of a greased 10-in. springform pan. Set aside. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and sugars until smooth. Add eggs; beat on low speed just until combined. Whisk in pumpkin, cornstarch, vanilla and pumpkin pie spice just until blended. Pour into crust. Place pan on a baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 60-65 minutes or until center is almost set. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes.
- Combine topping ingredients; spread over filling. Bake at 350° for 6 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Carefully run a knife around edge of pan to loosen; cool 1 hour longer. Refrigerate overnight. Remove sides of pan; set aside.
- For spiderwebs, draw six 3-in. x 2-in. half circles on two sheets of parchment paper. Place another sheet of parchment paper on top; tape both securely to work surface. In a saucepan, bring the sugar, cream of tartar and water to a boil over medium heat. Boil, without stirring, until mixture turns a light amber color and a candy thermometer reads 350°. Immediately remove from the heat and stir. Cool, stirring occasionally, for 10-15 minutes or until hot sugar mixture falls off a metal spoon in a fine thread.
- Using a spoon or meat fork, carefully drizzle syrup over half-circle outlines and inside the outlines to form spiderwebs; reheat syrup if needed. Cool completely. Place melted chocolate in a resealable plastic bag; cut a small hole in a corner of bag. Pipe 1-in. spiders onto parchment or foil; cool completely. With remaining melted chocolate, pipe two or three dots on each web; attach spiders.
- Remove sides of springform pan. Cut cheesecake; place a web on top of each slice and remaining spiders on the side. Refrigerate leftovers. **Yield:** 12 servings.
- **Editor's Note:** We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test. Webs and spiders can be made in advance and stored at room temperature in an airtight container.

Sour Cream Cranberry Bars (PICTURED AT RIGHT)

A filling made with dried cranberries is layered between a buttery crust and a golden crumb topping in these flavorful bars. They're a tart treat perfect for autumn gatherings.

BARBARA NOWAKOWSKI, MESA, ARIZONA

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 cups quick-cooking oats
- 1-½ cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, *divided*
- 2 cups dried cranberries
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter and brown sugar. Combine the oats and 1-½ cups flour; add to the creamed mixture until blended. Set aside 1-½ cups for topping. Press remaining crumb mixture into an ungreased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the cranberries, sour cream, sugar, egg, lemon peel, vanilla and remaining flour. Spread evenly over crust. Sprinkle with reserved crumb mixture. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate leftovers. **Yield:** about 3 dozen.

Caramel Flan (PICTURED AT RIGHT)

Sometimes I like to top this popular Mexican dessert with whipped cream and toasted slivered almonds.

ANNELLE MACK, MIDLAND, TEXAS

- ½ cup sugar
- 1-⅔ cups sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup milk
- 3 eggs
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook sugar until melted, about 12 minutes. Do not stir. When sugar is melted, reduce heat to low and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until syrup is golden brown, about 2 minutes. Quickly pour into an ungreased 2-qt. round souffle dish, tilting to coat the bottom; let stand for 10 minutes.

In a blender, combine the condensed milk, milk, eggs, yolks and vanilla. Cover and process for 15 seconds or until well blended. Slowly pour over syrup.

Place the souffle dish in a larger baking pan. Add 1 in. of boiling water to baking pan. Bake at 350° for 55-60 minutes or until center is just set (mixture will jiggle). Remove souffle dish from larger pan. Place on a wire rack; cool for 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

To unmold, run a knife around edge and invert flan onto a large rimmed serving platter. Cut into wedges or spoon onto dessert plates; spoon sauce over each serving. **Yield:** 8-10 servings.

Banana Pound Cake (PICTURED BELOW)

I adapted a basic pound cake recipe from my great-aunt for this treat. It makes a moist cake that pops out of the pan perfectly.

NANCY ZIMMERMAN, CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE, NEW JERSEY

- 3 teaspoons plus 3 cups sugar, *divided*
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 6 eggs
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas (about 2 medium)
- 1-½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon lemon extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup (8 ounces) sour cream

GLAZE:

- 1-½ cups confectioners' sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 to 4 teaspoons milk

- Grease a 10-in. fluted tube pan. Sprinkle with 3 teaspoons sugar; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and remaining sugar until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
- Stir in bananas and extracts. Combine flour and baking soda; add to the creamed mixture alternately with sour cream, beating just until combined.

- Pour into prepared pan (pan will be full). Bake at 325° for 75-85 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely.
- In a small bowl, whisk the glaze ingredients until smooth; drizzle over cake. Store in the refrigerator. **Yield:** 12-15 servings.

Gift Bags

TO HOLD trick-or-treat candy or party favors, these bags will be a hit on Halloween.

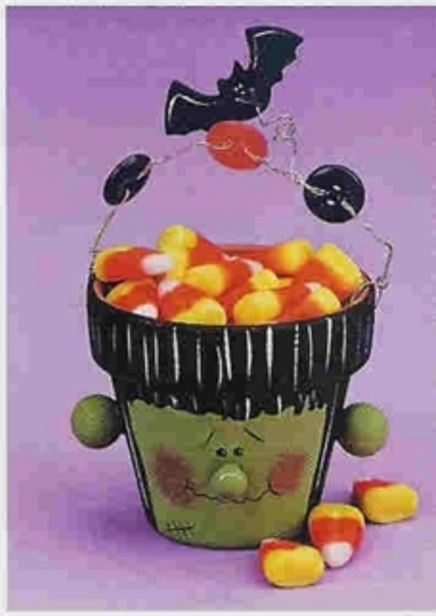
Use craft foam cutouts, chenille stems, cheese cloth and wiggle eyes to create decorative trims on purchased gift bags.

Frankenstein Treat Holder

QUICK TO MAKE, these clay pot candy holders are sure to bring a smile.

LORETTA MATEIK, PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA

Directions:



1. Paint the outside of a 2-½-inch diameter clay pot black.
2. Paint a green rectangle on one side of clay pot for face as shown in photo.
3. Paint two ½-inch wooden balls and a ¼-inch furniture plug green for ears and nose.
4. With a nearly dry brush and red, add cheeks to face. Use black fine-line marker to add eyes and remaining details.
5. Glue ears and nose to face.
6. Use a liner brush to add white highlights to nose and eyes and to add stripes around the top of the clay pot.
7. Drill holes in sides of pot. Thread buttons onto craft wire for handle. Insert wire through holes and twist to secure.
8. Place a plastic portion cup inside pot. Fill pot with candy.

Black Widow Bites (PICTURED ABOVE)

Our home economists add even more fun to Halloween with these candy spiders resting on a chocolate cookie web. Little goblins will be delighted with these sweet treats.

Black shoestring licorice
12 grape Jujubes
1 cup vanilla *or* white chips
24 red nonpareils
12 chocolate wafers

- Cut licorice into 96 pieces, about ½ in. long. Cut each piece lengthwise in half or quarters if necessary for thinner pieces. Using a toothpick, poke one licorice piece about ⅛ in. into a candy. Repeat seven times to make eight spider legs. Repeat with remaining licorice pieces and candy.
- Melt chips in a microwave or heavy saucepan; stir until smooth. Transfer to a heavy-duty resealable plastic bag; cut a small hole in a corner of bag. Pipe two small dots on one candy and immediately place one nonpareil on each dot to create eyes. Repeat with remaining candies.
- Pipe a web on each chocolate wafer. Pipe a dot of melted vanilla chips onto the bottom of the spider and attach to wafer. **Yield:** 1 dozen.

Peanut Butter Candy Pie (PICTURED BELOW)

It takes only a couple of ingredients and a few minutes to create two of these crispy colorful "pizzas." The chocolate layer and coconut and peanut butter candy toppings make this treat popular with children of all ages.

LAURA MAHAFFEY, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

¼ cup butter
4 cups miniature marshmallows
6 cups crisp rice cereal
50 milk chocolate kisses *or* 1-⅓ cups milk chocolate chips
½ cup flaked coconut
2 cups Reese's Pieces

- In a microwave-safe bowl, heat the butter and marshmallows on high for 1 minute; stir until marshmallows are melted. Add the cereal; mix well. Press onto the bottom and up the sides of two greased 9-in. pie plates.
- In a microwave or heavy saucepan, melt chocolate kisses; stir until smooth. Spread over prepared crusts. Sprinkle with coconut and candy pieces; press down lightly. Let stand until chocolate is set. Cut into slices. **Yield:** 2 pies (8 slices each).
- **Editor's Note:** This recipe was tested in an 850-watt microwave.

Pecan Cereal Clusters (PICTURED BELOW)

Featuring crunchy cereal, colorful candies, pecans and loads of peanut butter flavor, these chocolaty bites offer plenty of make-ahead convenience. They're easy to whip up when you're in a hurry.

DEBBIE ZORN, VIDALIA, GEORGIA

- ¾ cup peanut butter
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 3 cups Cheerios
- 1 package (14 ounces) milk chocolate M&M's
- ¾ cup pecan halves

Line three 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pans with waxed paper. In a large heavy saucepan over low heat, cook and stir the peanut butter and chocolate chips until chips are melted. Remove from the heat; stir in Cheerios, M&M's and pecans until evenly coated. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls onto prepared pans. Refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm. **Yield:** about 5 dozen.

Editor's Note: Reduced-fat or generic brands of peanut butter are not recommended for this recipe.

Pumpkin Chip Cupcakes

(PICTURED AT RIGHT)

I love these cupcakes since they are loaded with chocolate chips and chopped walnuts. My mom makes them for dessert on special occasions or for a sweet autumn snack.

JACINTA RANSOM
SOUTH HAVEN, MICHIGAN

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup honey
- ⅓ cup water
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup miniature chocolate chips

FROSTING:

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

Pecan halves, optional

In a large bowl, combine the first seven ingredients. Combine the eggs, pumpkin, oil, honey and water; mix well. Stir into dry ingredients just until combined; fold in walnuts and chocolate chips. Fill greased or foil-lined muffin cups three-fourths full. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

For frosting, in a small mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese, butter and vanilla until fluffy. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar until smooth. Frost cooled cupcakes. Top each with a pecan half if desired. **Yield:** 15 cupcakes.

Scare Up a Haunted House

BOO! Halloween's at hand, and ghosts have to live someplace. Why not spirit them away to this cute—and delicious—haunted house? "I make lots of spooky cookies at Halloween," says Joanne Woerlein of Etobicoke, Ontario. "One year I decided to try making a Halloween house out of sugar cookie dough. It was such fun!"

Haunted House

- ¾ cup butter, softened
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2-¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

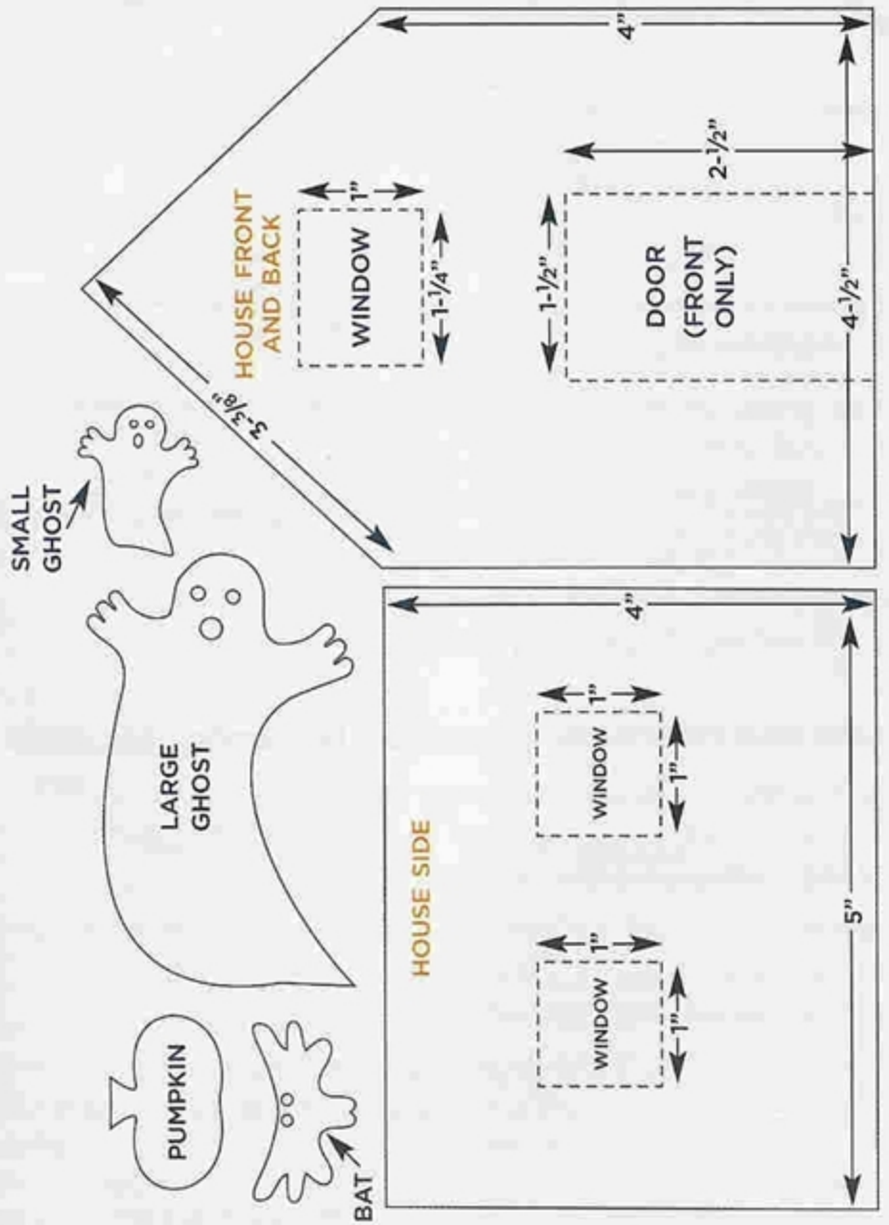
ICING AND ASSEMBLY:

- 4-½ cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons meringue powder
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 6 tablespoons warm water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Blue, green, black and orange paste food coloring
- Pastry tips—round #6 and #3
- Additional confectioners' sugar
- 10 to 14 orange Spree candies

- In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine flour and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture. Divide dough into thirds. Chill for 1-2 hours.
- On a lightly floured surface, roll out one portion of dough to ¼-in. thickness. Position house side pattern on dough. With a sharp knife, cut one side piece. Reroll scraps; cut another side piece. Score and cut out window outlines; set window pieces aside. Transfer side pieces to an ungreased baking sheet.
- Roll out second portion of dough. Position house front pattern on dough. Cut out house front; remove scraps. Cut out door and window pieces; set aside. Reroll scraps; cut out house back. Cut out window piece; set aside. ▶

- Roll out remaining dough into two 5-½-in. x 4-in. rectangles for roof pieces. Transfer front, back and roof pieces to ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 400° for 10-12 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.
- Cut reserved window pieces in half for shutters. Place shutters and door on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 400° for 5-7 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool for 10 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool.
- **To make icing:** In a mixing bowl, combine the first three ingredients. Add water and vanilla. Beat on low speed for 1 minute. Beat on high for 4-5 minutes or until stiff peaks form. Set aside 1 cup white icing. Tint remaining icing gray, using blue, green and black food coloring; set aside ½ cup. Thin remaining gray icing with 2 tablespoons water. Cover icing between uses.
- **To decorate:** Place front, back, side and roof pieces on a work surface. Insert #6 tip into a pastry bag; fill with ½ cup gray icing. Outline windows, doors and edges of house and roof with icing; let dry. Fill in outlines with thinned gray icing.
- **To assemble:** Transfer remaining thinned gray icing to a mixing bowl. Beat in 1-2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar until stiff peaks form. Pipe icing along sides of front and one side section. Position at right angles to each other on board. Press into place; prop with cans.
- Pipe icing along inside edge for added stability. Repeat with second side piece and back; let dry. Pipe icing along top edge of house. Position one roof piece; repeat. Pipe icing along top edge of roof pieces. Let dry completely.
- **To make decorations:** Divide reserved white icing into thirds. Tint one portion black and one orange; leave remaining icing white. Using #3 tip and white icing, outline two large and three small ghosts on waxed paper; let dry. Thin remaining white icing with 1-2 teaspoons water. Fill in ghost outlines. Let dry completely.
- Use orange icing to make three pumpkins; use black icing for three bats. Let dry. Thicken remaining black icing with 1-2 teaspoons confectioners' sugar; pipe faces onto pumpkins and ghosts. Let dry completely. Use a toothpick and thinned white icing to make bat eyes; let dry.
- **Finishing touches:** To remaining gray icing, add black coloring to make a darker gray. Using #6 tip and dark gray icing, pipe U-shaped designs on roof for shingles; let dry. Thin remaining icing if necessary with water, then spread over shutters and doors; let dry.
- With remaining thickened black icing, pipe a tombstone and "RIP" on the door; let dry. Attach the door, shutters, ghosts, bats and pumpkins with icing. Attach Spree candies to roof.
- **Editor's Note:** Meringue powder can be ordered by mail from Wilton Industries, Inc. Call 1-800/794-5866; www.wilton.com.

PATTERNS FOR HAUNTED HOUSE—Enlarge patterns 200%. Trace onto waxed paper and cut out.



Have Some Ghostly Goodies to Share?

IF YOU CONSIDER Halloween a "spooktacular" holiday and do lots of frighteningly fun things to celebrate, why not share your ideas with other *Halloween Food & Fun* readers? They could be featured in a future edition. We're looking for:

- creepy but clever recipes for beverages, snacks, main dishes, desserts and more that are perfect for serving at a Halloween party
- devilish ways to decorate your home or yard
- special invitations that set the right spooky mood for your gathering
- costumes for adults or children that can be created without going "batty"
- seasonal crafts for party favors, table-toppers, etc. that others shouldn't be "scared" to try
- games for a Halloween party that are a hit with younger or grown-up boys and "ghouls"

Send details and clear color photos by November 30, 2005 to:

Heidi Lloyd, Editorial Books, Reiman Publications, 5400 S. 60th St., Greendale WI 53129. Or, E-mail to **bookeditors@reimanpub.com**. Put "Halloween Ideas" in your subject line.

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If we feature you and your material, you will be notified by mail and will receive a complimentary copy of the printed material.

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DO the mouth-watering recipes in *Halloween Food & Fun* whet your appetite for more special-occasion dishes? Then be sure to check out *Taste of Home's Holiday & Celebrations Cookbook 2005!*

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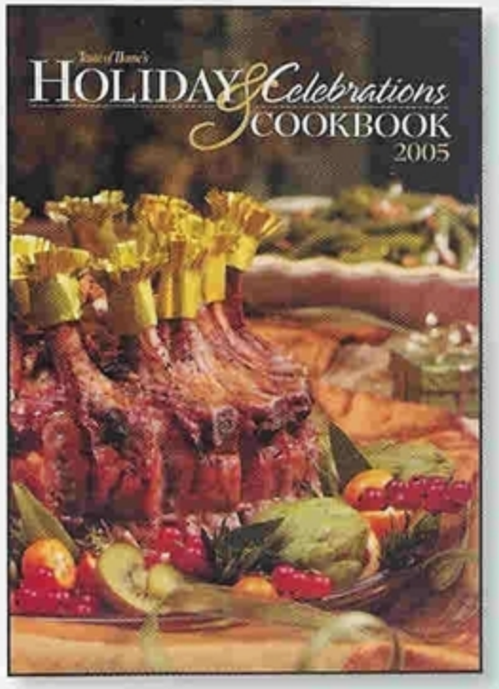

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